

10629

# BUDDHIST ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY

AS REFLECTED IN EARLY BUDDHISM

Dr. Dharmasena Hettiarachchi



The Doctoral Thesis presented to  
The Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka.  
April, 1991



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## Foreword

I consider it a great privilege and a pleasure to be able to publish the English translation of the Doctoral thesis of Dr. Dharmasena Hettiarachchi, a former Deputy Commissioner of this Department, which is entitled, "The Buddhist Economic Philosophy as Reflected in Early Buddhism".

The consensus of scholars is that upto date no comprehensive study has been done with regard to Buddhist Economic Philosophy that lay scattered in Buddhist teachings. At a time when all our economic planning and programming is done on the basis of theories and philosophies of the West, this work will clearly show that the economy of Sri Lanka, a country that has inherited a civilization fostered and nurtured by Buddhism and Buddhist culture, could be founded on Buddhist Economic Philosophy.

I thank all those who helped in the publication of this monumental piece of research by Dr. Dharmasena Hettiarachchi.

**Wijayanayake Rajapakse**

Commissioner of Educational Publications  
& Deputy Director General of Education

27. 07. 2001  
Educational Publications Department,  
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## **Dedication**

“Ukkhadharo manussanam niccā apacito maya”

**Suttanipata, Rahula Sutta, Stanza No. 338**

“Brahmāṇi matapitaro  
pubbacariyati vuccare”

**Anguttaranikaya, Sabrahma Sutta**

Translation	- Mr. Sanath Nanayakkara
Editing	- Prof. Chandima Wijebandara
Editorial assistance	- Mrs. Ruwani Wijewickrama Assistant Commissioner, Educational Publications Department.
Proof reading	- Mrs. Padma Samarasinghe Educational Publications Department. Mrs. Wasantha Alahakoon Educational Publications Department.
Coordination	- Mrs. E. F. D. Nanayakkara Additional Commissioner Educational Publications Department.

## I

“Katamo ca bhikkhave puggalo devicakkhu idha bhikkhave ekaccassa puggalassa tatharupam cakkhum hoti, yatharupena **Chakkhuna** anadhigatam va bhogam adhigaccheyya, adhigatam va bhogam phatikareyya, tatha rupampissa cakkhu hoti, yatharupena **Chakkhuna** Kusalakusaladhamme janeyya, savajjanavajja dhamme janeyya, ninappanitedhamme janeyya, kanhasukkasappatibhaga dhamme janeyya, ayam vuccati bhikkhave puggalo dvicakkhu.....”

“Andham ca eka cakkhum ca araka parivajjaye  
dvicakkhum pana sevetha settham purisapuggalam

Anguttaranikaya, Andha (Dvicakkhu) Sutta.

## II

“Tatra gamini... kamabhogi dhammena bhoge pariyesati asahasena, dhammena bhoge pariyesitva asahasena attanam sukheti pineti samvibhajati punnani karoti, tena ca bhoge agathito amucchito anajjhapanno adinavadassavi nissaranapanno paribhunjati.”

Samyuttanikaya, Rasiya Sutta.

## PREFACE

It is no secret that the whole world is faced with an economic crisis, and this is so irrespective of the fact that whether the countries are developed or under-developed. On the face of this crises, the validity of traditional economic theories are being constantly challenged. The question, whether one should follow the socialist economic system or the capitalist economic system, has now become redundant. The experiences we have had, during the last century or so, have clearly shown that both these systems have failed to deliver the goods.

Now, the consensus of the majority is that the present world needs an economic system that transcends both the above extremes. We, now constantly hear of attempts made at evolving such an economic system. In this context, the intelligentsia of both East and West are focussing their attention on religious philosophies of the East. Perhaps, self-sufficient societies that have been in existence for over a millenium, in countries like India and China, may have been instrumental in drawing their attention to the East. Any one, who observes the situation either in India or China, would not fail to recognize the dominant role played by Buddhism in their respective cultures. Therefore, it is no secret that now, many have become curious to examine the benefits that could be obtained from Buddhism to ease out the present economic crisis. As a consequence a number of books have appeared on the subject.

For quite sometime, there have been constant references made to a Buddhist economic philosophy. When examining these attempts made by many at enunciating this economic philosophy, it becomes evident that they are limited to a few discourses in the Tripitaka. The discourses that have been dealt with in these attempts are the Cakkavattisihanada, Kutadanta, Sigalovada and the Aggañña in the Dighanikaya, and a few from the Anguttaranikaya namely, the Pattakamma, Ariyawansa, Vyagghapajja, and Anana. My sincere view is that these attempts have not been successful in developing a comprehensive Buddhist Economic Philosophy that lay scattered throughout the scriptures.

There are a few pre-requisites necessary for such a comprehensive study, and first among these is language proficiency as well as a good grasp of Buddhist Philosophy. Such a study cannot be successfully conducted by one who is not well conversant with Sinhala, Pali, Sanskrit and also English. It is equally important to have a thorough understanding of the fundamentals of early Buddhism. I am sure that the readers of this book will realize that this is the first time that the attention of such well-equipped scholars has been focussed on this subject.

My sincere belief is that this book entitled, "The Buddhist Economic Philosophy Reflected in Early Buddhism" written by Dr. Dharmasena Hettiarachchi is the first most commendable attempt at bringing out a very comprehensive account on the subject. The Sri Lanka Buddhist and Pali University conferred its first Doctoral degree on this work and I am happy that I, too, had a role to play in this. I wish to record that this thesis was highly commended by both internal and external examiners, and the University authorized the publication of it without any amendment.

Buddhist Economic Philosophy is not limited to a few often quoted discourses. It pervades the totality of Buddhist thought. Therefore, it is necessary, at least, to scan the Vinaya Pitaka and the Sutra Pitaka to mark its parameters. Fundamentals of Buddhist Economic Philosophy are found to be imbedded in such basic teachings as the three characteristics of phenomena (tilakkhana), kamma, re-birth, dependent-co-origination, middle path and so on. There is no need to harp on the fact that pioneering work in this regard has been successfully accomplished by this work.

Dr. Dharmasena Hettiarachchi very clearly brings into focus that it is Buddhist Economic Philosophy that remains the sole refuge of the modern society battered and made hapless by excessive greed, hoarding of wealth, immoderate expenditure, exploitation of natural resources and the unsuccessful attempts at satisfying insatiable sensual desires. He should be commended by all for this attempt of his in bringing out this most significant aspect of Buddhist Philosophy.

The publication of an English version of this book will be of much benefit to whole mankind, and if someone undertakes this task it would certainly be extremely commendable. As the supervisor of this thesis I could vouch for one fact and that is Dr. Dharmasena Hettiarachchi has not left any stone unturned in gathering material to present his case. His attempt at acquainting himself with studies related to economics certainly has contributed to enhance the quality of research. I can confidently describe this as a work that has shattered many challenges levelled against Buddhism.

My sincere belief is that there is no book which is better than this from which one could get at least some idea of the immensely valuable service Buddhist Economic Philosophy renders in building a peaceful, self-sufficient, righteous and a serene society.

**Professor Oliver Abeynayake**

Director of Research  
Sri Lanka Buddhist and Pali University.

## Introduction

Numerous statements made by scholars engaged in Buddhist studies clearly show that they have often been confronted with the question whether there could possibly be an economic philosophy in a Nibbana-oriented mode of life which is explained as a transcendental state. If explanations given by these scholars to fundamental concepts of Buddhism are accepted without reservation, then this sort of questions would naturally arise. However, the best approach to overcome such questions is to make a fresh, independent study of the basic texts without reposing undue confidence either on traditional definitions or modern interpretations. Man can no longer strive to sustain a religion that is incapable of solving his present problems. The Buddha also advocates the necessity of analysing the present experience. Yet, the traditional explanations regarding fundamentals of Buddhism are often done, taking the concepts out of context, disregarding their applicability to day to day situations and problems. This is one of the causes that have prompted some to question the right of Buddhists to social, political and economic activities.

Prior to the publication of Schumacher's **Small is Beautiful**, which contains a chapter on Buddhist Economics, there has not been much interest on this subject either in the East or West. The present research shows how scholars like Professor W. S. Karunaratne, in 1950, stressed the importance of examining the Buddha's teachings on politics and economics.

Modern scientists engaged in research in diverse fields have shown how problems created by modern economic systems are posing threats even to the very existence of mankind. The Buddha declared that truth is one, with no second. However, there are some Buddhists who hold that there are individual truths and that the dispensation is not providing any comfort. Such Buddhists need not be surprised when outside scholars observe and present certain aspects of the specifically Buddhist doctrine of dependent co-origination or some facts pertaining to "restraint". However, real restraint results only from knowledge regarding the true nature of things. The philosophy that springs from the economical

teachings is capable of generating restraint in the individual. This "restraint" which regulates all institutions at whatever level, individual, social, etc. is the human norm that is most essential to solve all problems that crop up in modern economies. The individual who is moulded and regulated by this restraint would be capable of directing the economy, in any given context, to the benefit of mankind.

Some aspects of Buddhist economic thought have attracted the attention of certain scholars. Yet, it is not easy to come across any attempt at presenting a comprehensive Buddhist economic philosophy based on material scattered throughout the scriptures.

In this study there was the opportunity to focus on certain discourses which had so far not received the attention they really deserve, and also to duly emphasize certain discourses, though well-known but not given due emphasis. Herein no attempt has been made either to compare the prevailing economics with the Buddhist economy or to bring out the changes that have taken place during the historical evolution of the dispensation. The sole focus was on the Buddhist economic philosophy that is seen in the Tripitaka. These other aspects should be dealt with by scholars who are competent to work on them.

There are a few who deserve my special thanks.

It was Professor Y. Karunadasa who advised and encouraged me when selecting this subject of study. It was Professor L. P. N. Perera who initially instructed me on methodology. It was the Late Professor Tilak Ratnakara, who first, completely read the whole thesis, discussed its contents with me, introduced to me some text that were upto then unknown to me, provided photo copies of texts that were not accessible to me and also urged me to present the thesis without delay. Professor Oliver Abeynayake kindly gave me all guidance necessary to prepare the thesis in its present form. I thank all these teachers with the depth of my heart.

Discussions I had with Ven. Koswatta Ariyawimala Thera (M.A.) and Ven. Aswatta Revata Thera (M.A.) helped me to unravel some knotty problems I faced with regard to certain economical

references. I thank them both very sincerely. My sincere thanks are due also to Ven. Makure Piyananda Thera (M.A.), chief - incumbent of Neligama Sailasanarama and Ven. Dangahawela Mahanama Thera (M.A.), Chief - incumbent of Dangahawela Siri Jananandanarama for helping me to obtain necessary books and laying at my disposal their type-writers. I thank also Mr. Ananda Munasinghe of Minuwangoda, Mr. Neil Seneviratne of Mahara Nugegoda, Mr. G. M. Piyasena of Gonahena Maha Vidyalaya, Mr. R. N. Somaratne, Mr. K. Kaliyan and Miss Murian Basnayake of Educational Publications Department for helping me with preparing the typed copy. A special word of thanks is due to Mr. H. M. Moratuwagama (M. A. Hons.) for constantly prodding and encouraging me.

#### About the translation

The Buddhist Economic Philosophy as Reflected in Early Buddhism is the translation of the thesis, originally written by me in Sinhala under the title "Mul Budusamayen Heliwana Baudha Arthika Darshanaya".

I must take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the translator Mr. Sanath Nanayakkara, who was a member of the editorial board of the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism. I also thank Professor Chandima Wijebandara of the University of Sri Jayawardhanapura for introducing me to the translator and for editing the manuscript. I owe a special debt of gratitude to the authorities of the Educational Publications Department for bringing out this book in print.

**Dr. Dharmaśena Hettiarachchi**

25th, May 2001,  
"Sevana",  
233, Mahara, Nugegoda,  
Ragama.

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There are a few people who encouraged, helped and advised me in getting this book published. If not for them this book may not have come out in print. I very sincerely thank them all. They are-

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- Professor Oliver Abeynayake, Director, Research, Buddhist & Pali University, who very kindly guided and advised me from the very beginning of my research and provided a very illuminating introduction to the book.
- Professor K. Dharmasena, Vice-Chancellor of Kelaniya University and its former Professor of Economics and Dean of Social Sciences, who read the book and made observations.
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- My wife, Kumari my daughter and Nalaka my son, who were sources of strength to me throughout my research as well as in the publication of the book.

## The Abstract

The main objective of this study has been to bring into light facts about Buddhist Economic Philosophy found in the Tripitaka, specially in the Vinaya Pitaka and the Sutra Pitaka. The first section of Chapter I is devoted to explain the significance of the contemporary necessity which led the researcher to engage in this kind of research. The remaining sections have been devoted to find out how the fundamental teachings of Buddhism exert influence on the socio-economic activities of the individual. The German Sociologist Max Weber and his followers as well as those who have and have not engaged in Buddhist studies persistently say that a Buddhist has no say in socio-economic matters. An attempt has been made in this research, by taking into consideration the fundamental Buddhist teachings as they are explained in the Tripitaka itself, to demonstrate the baselessness of the assertion referred to above. In this context, the fundamental teachings pertaining to material and spiritual development, three characteristics of phenomena, Karma, meditation, the noble path, dependent co-origination etc. have been considered. The first section of Chapter II, deals with the Buddhist attitude, based on the Aggañña Sutta, towards origin and development of social institutions; the next three sections are devoted to consider certain social features that are important in regulating economic activities, to understand certain features in the social structure and to discuss the two important concepts namely, Sublime Abodes (brahma-vihara) and modes of hospitality (Sangahavatthu) while the Buddhist teaching on the family forms the main theme of the fifth section. The sixth section examines some special features in the community of monks which is considered the ideal Buddhist Society. Buddhist political views form the subject of discussion of the seventh section. Chapter III is devoted to a discussion of the philosophy that regulates and guides the economic activities of the individual in the context enunciated in the first two chapters. In this particular chapter production, consumption, distribution conservation as well as the philosophy behind consumption

have been dealt with in detail. The two concepts namely, righteousness and non-aggression in relation to economic activities have been examined as they are presented in the Vinaya and Sutta Pitakas. This examination brought to light that basic Buddhist texts present the five precepts and non-violence as emphasizing both abstention and observance (i. e. both in their negative and positive aspects) as well the importance of labour, and that non-aggression emphasizes non-exploitation of the labour force, consumers and the environment. The presentation of the Buddhist economic organization, specifically as enunciated in the Kutadanta Sutta, supporting and supplementing it with related ideas in Suttas such as the Aggañña and Cakkavatti sihanada as well as other references scattered in the Tripitaka, has been the objective of Chapter IV. The first part of this Chapter is devoted to show the necessity of a state based economic organization, the second section is devoted to examine the main features that should be present in such an organization.

Chapter V taken into consideration the economic philosophy in its totality attempts to show how meaningful it is in a Nibbana - oriented system of conduct consisting of a graduated course of training applicable to both the clergy and the laity. It also discusses how the Buddhist teachings on restraint (knowing proper limitations) become the most effective solution for most of the present day problems. Special attention of this study has been focussed on the fact that the present world has reached a stage where the Buddhist teachings on dependent co-ordination should be made the norm that generates restraint and regulate the economy.

## ABBREVIATIONS

A	Anguttara Nikaya
ACBC	All Ceylon Buddhist Congress
BPS	Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy.
C	Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, D. J. Kalupahana.
D	Digha Nikaya
Dh	Dhammapada
EB	Encyclopaedia of Buddhism
FBE	Fundamentals of Buddhist Ethics, Gunapala Dharmasiri.
It	Itivuttaka Pali
J	Jataka Pali
M	Majjhima Nikaya
PTS	Pali Text Society, London.
Pa	Parajika Pali
S	Samyutta Nikaya
Sn	Sutta Nipata
Ud	Udana Pali
Vin	Vinaya

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## Chapter I

# AN EXAMINATION OF THE BUDDHIST CONCEPTS THAT FORM THE FOUNDATION OF THE BUDDHIST ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY

## I. THE NECESSITY OF EXAMINING THE BUDDHIST ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY IN THE CANONICAL TEACHINGS

### 1.1

The man at present has reached an unprecedented level of material progress, and this is primarily due to the technological developments that has taken place as a result of the spread of scientific knowledge. Now it is possible for an individual to see or hear, in a moment, any event that takes place anywhere on earth. The radio, television, air planes, satellites and so on have turned the world into a global village.<sup>1</sup> Natural obstacles have been conquered, and national boundaries pose no hindrance. The whole planet of earth could be totally viewed from space. Man-made space crafts dart beyond the planet of earth, breaking its gravitational pull. The human mind has been successful in creating not only telescopes that are turned towards the universe that is thousand light-years away, but also in creating space crafts that speed across the far away universe. Numerous modern household gadgets have eased hardships of day to day life. Human labour is no longer necessary for cooking washing and drying clothes, polishing floors and even keeping accounts. Numerous developments, that have

taken place in the field of medicine are most astonishing. Not only grafting of various internal organs is possible; it is even possible to reactivate a heart that has completely stopped beating. These advancements are such that certain diseases have now been completely wiped off from the face of earth. It is now possible to lead healthier lives, with increased life expectancy. Equally astonishing are the advancements made in the field of agriculture. Artificial rain is now a possibility. Numerous kinds of manure, insecticides, and weedicides, various forms of budding plants, new varieties of high-yielding grains have contributed to an increase in production never thought of before. In brief, technological developments have made life on earth quite easy and comfortable.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2

Though man has achieved such a high level of material progress it is a well-known fact that many problems have arisen not only in under developed countries, but even in highly developed ones.<sup>3</sup> It appears that most of these problems are side effects of this unprecedented and rapid technological development. Utilizing scientific and technological developments man is busy in exhausting, not leaving any for the future generations, all minerals oils and fuels- that for so long lay secured in the womb of the earth. This indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources has made it necessary to seek for artificial substitutes for the use of future mankind. In this destructive process seas, rivers, earth and even air have been utterly polluted, making them unfit for human use. Consequently, the whole world is facing a grave danger. Certain kinds of flora and fauna have got completely extinguished and some others are facing the threat of becoming extinct. On one hand, increase in production has forced certain countries to dump thousands of tons of grain into oceans; on the other, millions of people in under-developed countries are dying of starvation, oppressed by malnourishment, sleeping in dire hunger. In the world studded with palatial sky-scrappers, some lay helpless on pavements, shivering in cold. The man who is in possession of a miraculous medical science is now in the process of being subjected to fatal,

incurable diseases. Population explosion has intensified the problems connected with food, housing, transport, health, education and so on. Thousands of unemployed youth have turned out to be springs of various vices and crimes. The man, who obtained his freedom by entrusting his work load to computers and robots, has now become quite restless and feels oppressed, because he is not in a position to enjoy his freedom. Men are compelled to use numerous kinds of tablets to induce appetite and sleep. Being engaged in a rat-race from morning till night they with their hopes shattered, fall victim to unrest; being sane or insane, they sometimes commit suicide. They go on picking inter-continental missiles and nuclear weapons to destroy all obstructions, however far and distant they may happen to be, that stand in the way of spreading their cherished views and ideologies. Even innocent people are shocked by the possibility of a nuclear war. The people themselves have increased and aggravated their problems so much, that they are unable to live with a feeling of security even in their own homes. It is a great irony that many of these problems are not by-products of modern technology, but ones that have been consciously created anew by man himself, who has been skillful enough to make gadgets and apparatus capable of making his life so comfortable.

## 1.3

These numerous problems that have arisen in the present community life are being discussed in varied academic circles. They are being analysed in political, economic, educational, psychological and such other fields. As most of these problems pertain to worldly and materialistic issues they can generally be categorized as economic problems. Obviously, scarcity of food, unemployment, housing problems and so on are all economic issues. Where does insomnia fit into? Normally it is considered a problem connected with health. Yet it could be seen, when examined minutely, that at least in certain instances its origin could be traced to economic causes. Perhaps, such mental conditions as unrest, discontentment, inferiority complex, which are caused by

frustration resulting from competitive market forces, could also be responsible for it. Such conditions of persistent insomnia might lead to varied health and social problems. The habit of seeking solace in numerous kinds of 'tablets' is a possible health hazard that could crop up from such a condition. An escapist reaction such as addiction to 'drugs' could manifest as a social problem resulting from this. Yet another social problem is the generation gap between children and parents, the young and the old. In the younger generation, enriched by the vast knowledge provided by science and by competency in handling gadgets produced by modern technology, there arises a superiority complex against the elders, and this contributes to further widen the generation gap. Thus it is obvious that quite a large number of problems in other spheres, too, are generally based on economic causes.

#### 1.4

These problems have grown into such magnitude that people are now beginning to wonder whether the humanity would any longer exist on earth. Educationists, politicians, scientists, the economic experts and so on, becoming conscious of the possibility of a nuclear war or an environmental disaster, are all alike seeking, within their respective fields and vocations, ways and means of avoiding such calamities. These experts are quite convinced about their incapability of solving these problems. The physicist Fritjof Capra, in order to explain the real nature of this situation, cites the following example. He says that Professor Erwin Crystal, of the New York University has said that I have nothing more to say, and I do not think that anyone else has anything more to say. When a problem becomes extremely difficult then all interest regarding it begins to fade away, and hence, I am resigning from the post. The educated people who have realized the gravity of the situation are now going beyond the boundaries of their respective disciplines in search of solutions.<sup>6</sup> The economists themselves have amply demonstrated that economic science by itself is inadequate to solve the economic problems. (11)

#### 1.5

The two opposing forces that are posing threats to world peace today are based on two theories which are about two hundred years old, and these theories were propounded by two distinguished personalities produced by the Industrial Revolution. These two personalities are Adam Smith and Karl Marx. The **magnum opus** of Adam Smith was published in 1776, and through this work he attempted to present evidence to justify and establish the philosophy of free trade which is the foundation of capitalism. About half a century later Karl Marx presented his dialectical materialism.<sup>7</sup> The observation on Adam Smith and Karl Marx by Jan Tinbergen<sup>8</sup> one of the first two Nobel Laureates for economics, is noteworthy. He says,

"We must remain open minded in a rapidly changing world. The great thinkers of the past, on whose views socialism, capitalist democracy and other modern socio-economic systems are based, could not foresee some of the fundamental changes in the productive forces now available and the environment in which we must live. For the market economics it was Adam Smith. For the market economics it was Karl Marx.

They could not foresee discovery of nuclear energy, a consequence of Einstein's theory of relativity. They could not foresee the development of the chemical industries, consequences of a large number of chemical discoveries ranging from medicines and preservatives to detergents and pesticides.

They could not foresee the resulting destruction and the pollution of the environment that would become such a threat to our lives and future.

Theories on socio-economic systems have to be adopted to these new discoveries and changing conditions."

#### 1.6

It is materialism that formed the foundation for both systems of economics that operate in the world now, namely, the market economy and the centralized planned economy. E. F. Schumacher, an economic expert, sums up materialism as follows:<sup>9</sup>

(Schumacher, E. F., *Small is Beautiful*, ABACUS edition, 1974, P. 246.)

"In the excitement over the unfolding of his scientific technical powers, modern man has built a system of production that ravishes nature and a type of society that mutilates man. If only there were more and more wealth, everything else, it is thought, would fall into place. Money is considered to be all-powerful; if it could not actually buy non-material values, such as justice, harmony, beauty or even health, it could circumvent the need for them or compensate for their loss. The development of production and the acquisition of wealth have thus become the highest goals of the modern world in relation to which all other goals, no matter how much lip-service may still be paid to them, have come to take second place. The highest goals require no justification; all secondary goals have finally to justify themselves in terms of the service their attainment renders to the attainment of the highest.

This is the philosophy of materialism,....."

#### 1.7

Schumacher, who ventures out from his own area of study in search of solutions for economic problems, through his own personal experience gained while working and living in Myanmar, identifies an economic science in Buddhist teachings and devotes the 4th chapter of his well-known work "*Small is Beautiful*" to explain his understanding of this. He, analysing such Buddhist concepts as Buddhist attitude to work, non-violence, nature, and friendship presents some important observations. Capra<sup>10</sup> who examines Schumacher's works points out that the main aim of the latter's economic philosophy is to assign definite values to economic thought. At the same time he finds fault with the contemporary economists for failing to understand that all economic theories are based on certain value systems and a philosophy of the human nature. Capra points out also how Schumacher explains his view by comparing two completely different systems of economics, having distinct sets of values and

goals. One is the present materialistic economy which measures the standard of living by the annual consumption rate, and hence, provides a maximum consumption rate through a minimum productive pattern. The other is the Buddhist economic system based on 'Right Livelihood' an item in the Noble Eightfold Path. This has as its object the maximum human development based on a minimum consumption rate.

#### 1.8

Owing to the author's personal fame as well as due to the novelty of the contents, Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* became very popular. It succeeded in drawing the attention of the learned through the views it presents regarding Buddhist economic thought. So did Capra's *The Tao of Physics*. The connection between these two books prompted Capra to write another book called *The Turning Point*.<sup>11</sup> Capra says that Schumacher's views were so well-known in America that Gerry Brown, the Governor of California, drew inspiration from these views when he planned his economic policy.<sup>12</sup>

Prof. Padmasiri de Silva while observing that in the quest for Buddhist economy Schumacher has opened up a new avenue, further adds that, not only guidance for individuals to regulate their lives but also numerous teachings that are conducive to evolving an effective state economy could be found in Buddhism.<sup>13</sup> Prof. David Kalupahana opines that Schumacher got these ideas not merely by reading Buddhist scriptures, but through personal experience he obtained by observing the lives of the village folk in remote parts of Myanmar and other south and South-east Asian countries.<sup>14</sup> A study of scriptures may provide evidence that either supports or rejects Schumacher's views. What is important is that Schumacher's views provide an impetus to search for an economic philosophy in the Buddhist scriptures.

#### 1.9

Even before the publication of Schumacher's work, certain other scholars who studied Pali Tripitaka had presented certain views

regarding a Buddhist economy. Prof. W. S. Karunaratne writing to the **Wesak Number** of 1965, published by the Department of Cultural Affairs of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) observed that it appears that many, including the Buddhists, are unaware of the Buddha's economic thought; that socialism has become so popular at present that it is almost impossible to avoid bumping into a non-socialist; but none of the socialist historians have been able to get at the earliest stages of socialism from the Tripitaka which serves as an important source book for this purpose. He also pointed out that uniquely flexible socialistic thoughts and practices that are evident in the Buddha's life and his discourses are found applicable even at present.<sup>15</sup> He brings into focus two factors that are found in any socialist economy. One of these is the Buddha's analysis of social suffering which according to the **Cakkawattisihanada Sutta** is caused by the wide spread poverty resulting from non-production of goods; and the other is the fundamental principle of common ownership of property which is referred to in the **Vinaya Pitaka**.

Another well known Buddhist scholar who presented the view that there exists a Buddhist economic philosophy and attempted to bring out some of its features was Ven. Prof. Henpitagedara Ñanavasa Thera.<sup>16</sup>

### 1.10

Ven. Prof. Kamburupitiye Ariyasena Thera<sup>17</sup> who holds the view that there is a succinct economic philosophy in early Buddhism brings out, by way of a hypothesis, some of its fundamental characteristics. These ten fundamental characteristics are given below as they need to be examined.

- (i) The economic philosophy in Buddhism is not related in any way to the belief in God. In the ancient world there was a belief in the Universal Mother (Jaganmata), the goddess of prosperity. In the vedic times a god called Pusan - the Lord of Cattle, is referred to, in certain religious beliefs. The individual's economic life is closely inter-twined with beliefs in gods and spirits. But Buddhism emphasises the necessity as well as the nature of human labour.

- (ii) In ancient Greece economic production was considered the responsibility of the slaves; and both Plato and Aristotle approved this view. In India the economy was related to the caste theory. There is no such view in Buddhism, and it does not consider economic production the responsibility of a particular class of the society.
- (iii) In Buddhism the concept of "wealth" is related to ethics. As the Buddha rejects the deterministic view that everything that one experiences in the present is the consequence of his past deeds, it is pertinent to further examine the relation between the Buddhist economic philosophy and the Karma doctrine.
- (iv) According to Buddhism economy is related not only to the material, the worldly aspect, but also to the humanitarian and spiritual aspects, and hence, it is connected to both material and spiritual progress.
- (v) Labour is considered the foundation of economic development.
- (vi) Economic philosophy is considered in the context of the mutual relations that exist among three factors, namely, the individual, the family and the society.
- (vii) Declaration of definite and specific policies regarding the state and economic development. Herein views are expressed regarding planned production and equal distribution of wealth.
- (viii) Presentation of a hypothetical economic policy
- (ix) The Buddhist views of enjoyment of wealth
- (x) The aim of Buddhist economic philosophy is to remove disparities among production, distribution and consumption to regulate various influences of the economy on the people's lives to save the individual from getting enslaved to the economy, and instead to use the economic forces for the righteous well being of the humans and finally to bring about the welfare and prosperity of the individual, the family and the associates.<sup>18</sup>

### 1.11

While there are a large number of scholars of both East and West who uphold the view that there is a Buddhist economic philosophy, there are a few sociologists who hold the opposite view, and one such well known sociologist is Prof. Max Weber. He presents this view in both his well known books namely, **Sociology of Religion**<sup>19</sup> and **Religions of India**<sup>20</sup>. Some other scholars like Melford Spiro,<sup>21</sup> Heinz Bechert<sup>22</sup> also helped to popularize Weber's view and some others who are not conversant with the Tripitaka too have endorsed it. If the fundamental doctrines in Buddhism are really opposed to any socio-economic development, then it is futile to discuss about it. Therefore it is of paramount importance to examine the views expressed by Prof. Max Weber and others. Professors such as D. D. Kosambi, and Trevor Ling have already examined this view.

### 1.12

Among the many fundamental doctrines of Buddhism which these scholars consider as being detrimental to socio-economic activities, the following have been subjected to severe criticism.

- (a) The Noble Truth of Suffering
- (b) The No-self concept
- (c) Karma doctrine
- (d) Meditation
- (e) Nirvana

Besides, the Sangha institution, too, has come under criticism. What is intended here is to identify briefly the criticisms levelled against each of these concepts, and find out their true nature in accordance with the evidence in the Tripitaka,

### 1.13

There is another factor that some other scholars cite as being detrimental to socio-economic progress. They say that people in

certain traditional Buddhist countries are apathetic to progress and are therefore, bogged in dire poverty. They cite Buddhism as the cause of this. They also maintain that Buddhism justifies poverty and that concepts such as contentment (Santutthi), detachment (viraga), renunciation (nekkamma), simplicity (appicchata) and Kamma, all contribute to distract the individual from competition and pursuit of material progress. Dr. Ananda Guruge<sup>26</sup> questions the validity of this view and poses a counter question whether it is religion or such other causes as climatic conditions, scarcity of natural resources, exploitation by colonial rulers, foreign invasions that lay out the root of poverty. Pointing out many more contributory factors he observes:

"If Buddhist leadership fails to act fast and combine spiritual and material welfare as a common objective, the poor have no alternative but to be guided by materialistic considerations only."<sup>27</sup>

While leaving the investigation in to causes of poverty in traditionally Buddhist countries to a person competent in that area herein attention is focussed on the issue, whether there is any conflict between fundamental Buddhist concepts and economic progress.

### 1.14

The Part II of this chapter would be devoted to examine the relevance of the three basic characteristics of phenomena to economic activities. Part III will contain a discussion regarding the relation between material progress and spiritual progress, according to the Tripitaka. The Weberian criticisms, and the importance of Karma concept which are regarded by some as an obstacle to progress in individual and societal economic activities would be dealt with in section IV. The relevance of the concepts **puñña** and **kusala**, too would be discussed in the same section. The importance of meditation on the sphere of economics will be the theme of section V. In section VI an attempt would be made to examine questions such as "whether the path of freedom and

Nirvana are attempts to escape from life or ways to make life meaningful". and find an answer from the scriptures. Section VII would be concerned with examining the relevance of the doctrine of Dependent co-ordination (paticcasamuppada) to the field of economics. An examination of the Sangha Institution would be done in the second chapter which deals with the Buddhist social philosophy.

## II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF PHENOMENA IN SOCIO - ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

### 1.15

"As Buddhism teaches about suffering it presents a kind of pessimism. It could be regarded as a nihilistic teaching".<sup>28</sup> A teaching that emphasises suffering is not able to spur man into activity. An individual who works for his own welfare and for the welfare of the society will not arise from a teaching that considers everything as suffering.<sup>29</sup>

How relevant are criticisms of this sort presented by some Buddhist scholars to the Noble Truth of suffering taught by the Buddha? As Buddhism regards the doctrine of suffering or non-satisfactoriness as its fundamental doctrine, and the realization, through insight wisdom, of the three characteristics of phenomena namely, impermanency (**anicca**) non-satisfactoriness (**dukkha**) and non-substantiality (**anatta**) as its path to freedom, it is proper to take into consideration collectively the objections, raised against both these concepts viz., dukkha and anatta. As man's all socio-economic activities are moulded by the way he understands these basic concepts, a clarification regarding them is of primary importance. These three basic characteristics of phenomena form the basis for the development of the Buddhist philosophy pertaining to the practice leading to the realization of freedom as well as to the enjoyment of subjects of senses, and consequently to the philosophy pertaining to socio-economic activities.

### 1.16

As described in the Nikaya texts all compounded things are impermanent and suffering, seeing this fact through wisdom, which means the acquisition of intuitive knowledge about this fact is the path to purity or to the realization of Nirvana.<sup>30</sup> An examination of three suttas namely **Maha-Sudassana**, **Satta suriyuggamana** and **Vajira** suffices to understand the wide range of meanings connected by the word **sankhara** or Skt. **sanskara**. As recorded in the **Maha-Sudassana Sutta** the ancient King Maha Sudassana led a wonderfully prosperous and long life, endowed with limitless wealth, cities, palaces, elephants, horses, chariots, women and children etc. Finally, he had to abandon all these when he passed away. After presenting this account the Buddha addressing Ven. Ananda says:

"Look, Ananda, all these conditioned things have now passed away, have completely vanished and got destroyed. Ananda, therefore, these conditioned things cannot be relied upon. These things are so futile that they suffice to lead one to disenchantment, to detachment and to release."<sup>31</sup>

Finally the whole idea is summed up in a stanza.

"Anicca vata sankhara - uppada vaya dhammino  
uppajjitva nirujjhanti - tesam vupasamo sukho"<sup>32</sup>

(Indeed all compounded things are impermanent, subject to rising and falling. Having arisen they die; their appeasement is happiness).

The **Satta-suriyuggamana Sutta** shows how after the lapse of a long period there will come a time when there will be no rain; the heat of the sun will increase first burning up the grass, then plants, creepers and trees. The streams and rivulets will run dry. So will be large ponds. This will be followed by the drying up of great rivers like the Gangese and Yamuna.

The sun will become blazing hot. There will be a second sun and a third, till there will arise seven suns in all. Finally the whole

earth will catch fire, leaving only soot and ashes. Then, in the summing up it is said, "These compounded things are impermanent, unstable and undependable. There should be disenchantment with regard to these. There should be a release from them."<sup>33</sup>

According to both these suttas whatever things there are in the external physical world, all such things are conditioned things. Their primary characteristic is impermanency.

### 1.17

The world that is emphasised in the noble discipline is the world in relation to the individual. Therefore, what is important is to understand the nature of conditioned things in relation to the individual. The **Vajira Sutta** of the **Bhikkuni-Samyutta** can be considered as providing a significant explanation on this. Once, the Mara, the Evil one, questioned the bhikkuni thus "Who made this being? Where did this being arise? Where will this being cease?

To this bhikkini Vajira replied:

"What do you believe in a being? This is an evil view of yours. This is only a 'bundle of perceptions'. There is no being here."

"Just as when parts are assembled together the word 'chariot' arises; similarly when the aggregates are there, there is the conventional use of the term 'being'.<sup>34</sup>

This makes it quite clear, that 'the being' is merely a 'bundle of perceptions' (*sankhara punja*) and this 'bundle' is nothing other than a concentration of the five aggregates. Ven. Prof. Walpola Rahula explains this as follows:-

"What we call a 'being' or an 'individual' or 'I' is only a convenient name or a label given to the combination of these five groups. They are all impermanent, constantly changing.<sup>35</sup>

Therefore, everything related to man and the world is compounded. The conclusion we can arrive at, on the evidence of suttas, is succinctly presented by Prof. Wijesekara.<sup>36</sup>

"It is easy to understand from this dialogue in what an all-embracing sense the term 'Sankhara' is used: it includes all things, all phenomena that come into existence by natural development or evolution, being conditioned by prior causes and therefore, containing within them the liability to come to an end, to be dissolved from the state in which they are found".

### 1.18

The five aggregates are form (**rupa**), feeling (**vedana**), perception (**sañña**) mental formations (**sankhara**) and consciousness (**viññana**). The form is the physical form which consists of the four primary elements of matter and the twenty four derivative elements. Feeling is three-fold namely, pleasant, unpleasant and neutral and arise when sense faculties come into contact with sense objects. **Sañña** is the perception of physical or mental objects that come within that purview of the six sense faculties. All wholesome and unwholesome mental concomitants are included in '**sankhara**'. Consciousness is six-fold, depending on the particular sense faculty involved. Thus depending on the eye and form arises eye-consciousness. It is so with regard to the other five sense faculties. It is because of the uninterrupted continuity of the five aggregates that the designations such as 'being', 'individual', 'man' etc., arise. They are impermanent and are mere energies. In the words of Ven. Prof. Walpola Rahula.<sup>37</sup>

"There is no unmoving mover behind the movement. It is only the movement. It is not correct to say that life is moving, but life is movement itself. Life and movement are not two different things. In other words there is no thinker behind thought. Thought itself is the thinker. If you remove the thought, there is no thinker to be found".

When we really understand that the terms 'being', 'individual', 'man' are mere designations and that there is only a 'bundle of perceptions' subject to rise and fall, then we can realize that there is no substance or 'self, or 'soul' behind these aggregates. This is

what is meant by 'no-self', doctrine. It is not the postulation of a new, opposite concept called 'no-self'.

### 1.19

The first of the Four Noble Truths is the Noble Truth of Suffering (Dukkha). The Buddha himself has declared that his whole teaching is meant to explain the prevalence of dukkha and its cessation.<sup>38</sup> It is stated that one who fully comprehends dukkha, comprehends also its arising, cessation, and path leading to cessation.<sup>39</sup> In other words what is meant is that one who understands the first truth, understands also the other three truths. The Buddha has declared that the world is established on dukkha.<sup>40</sup> Basing on this Prof. Wijesekara<sup>41</sup> says:

"This observation of the universal fact of unsatisfactoriness is, as any unbiased student of Buddhism will soon realize, the central pivot of the whole system of spiritual and moral progress, discovered and proclaimed by the Buddha".

### 1.20

In his first discourse itself the Buddha has defined dukkha as follows: Birth is dukkha, decay.. disease... death, association with the undesirable as well as the dissociation from the desirable is dukkha; not to obtain what one desires is dukkha. In brief the five aggregates of clinging are dukkha". A few more facts are added in the *Saccavibhanga Sutta*<sup>43</sup> and these are grief, lamentation, depression and anxiety. Canonical texts categorize dukkha into three as dukka-dukkha, viparinama-dukkha' and 'sankhara-dukkha'<sup>44</sup> Of these, one can easily understand 'dukkha-dukkha' and 'viparinama dukkha'. But it is not so easy to grasp what is meant by 'Sankhara dukkha'.<sup>45</sup>

### 1.21

Is there only dukkha in the world? Does man experience only dukkha? Any one who examines his experience will not fail to

realize that he experiences both suffering (dukkha) and happiness (sukha). If so, by emphasising dukkha does Buddhism reject sukha? Does the Noble Truth of suffering reject happiness?

It is seen that the *Anguttara nikaya* contains one whole chapter called '*Sukha vagga*'. Herein, the Buddha presents happiness in twenty-six different modes. Some of these are, happiness of the householder, happiness of a recluse, sensual happiness, happiness of renunciation, mental and physical happiness and so on.<sup>46</sup> Thus it is seen that Buddhism accepts also the prevalence of happiness in the world.

The *Maha Dukkakhandha Sutta* of the *Majjhima nikaya* sheds much light on this. Herein the Buddha while explaining the enjoyment of sensations, describes also the happiness experienced in the four absorptions (*jhana*). The first absorption that results from solitude consists of *piti* (rapture) and *sukha* (joy). The fourth jhanic state is of special significance in this regard. It is explained as "After giving up pleasure and pain and through the disappearance of previous joy and grief... a state beyond pleasure and pain which is purified by equanimity and mindfulness.

The Buddha, who praised the jhanic bliss pointed out that such bliss too is impermanent, non-satisfactory and subject to change.<sup>46</sup> As shown by Ven. Prof. Walpola Rahula it should be noted that in this instance the Buddha specifically used the term 'dukkha' to explain the real nature of jhana. These jhanic states are described as dukkha, not because there is in those states suffering meant by the general meaning of the word, they are described as dukkha because these states are also subject to change, and what ever is subject to change or impermanent is dukkha (*yad aniccam tam dukkham*).<sup>47</sup> This is what is meant by viparinama dukkha and hence connotes a higher philosophical impact of the meaning of dukkha.

There are other instances in which the dukkha concept is explained differently. When it is said in the *Dhammapada*<sup>48</sup> "Sons have I, wealth have I," thus is he worried (*vihaññati*). The idea of being worried (*vihaññati*) is used to connote 'dukkha'. All this

is included in the 'Viparinama dukkha'. It is not difficult to understand that one experiences unhappiness when happiness changes. Therefore it is clear that the Noble Truth of suffering has to be comprehended in a much profound manner.

## 1.22

The Buddha declared the Noble Truth of dukkha by saying that "in brief the five aggregates of clinging (**panchupadanakkhanda**) are dukkha. Here the aggregates of clinging and dukkha are not given as two separate factors, the aggregates of clinging themselves are dukkha; and comprehension of this fact amounts to the comprehension of dukkha. The Buddha made this very clear in the **Saccasamyutta** wherein he says "**Katamanca bhikkhave dukkham ariyasaccam - pancupadanakkhandhati**".<sup>49</sup> What is meant by saying that, the five aggregates of clinging are dukkha? The five aggregates are form (*rupa*), feeling (*vedana*) etc., When it is said that 'rupa' is dukkha does it mean that mere form of it is dukkha? What exactly is meant is that dukkha arises due to clinging one develops towards form. This fact has to be understood clearly.

To understand the aggregates properly one has to understand their three stages namely **assada**, (enjoyment) **adinava** (their evil consequences) and **nissarana** (release therefrom). The Buddha declared that there is enjoyment in form and he also pointed out that if there was no such enjoyment, people would not be attached to it.<sup>50</sup>

The nature of this enjoyment is clearly explained in the **Mahadukkhakkhandha Sutta**. "Monks, what is the enjoyment of sensual pleasures? These sensual pleasures are four fold. This form to be perceived by eye-consciousness is dear, attractive, pleasing to the mind; pleasant and causes attachment, binds the mind. This is so with regard to other sense objects. Whatever joy and happiness that arise due to these five sensual pleasures, is the enjoyment of sensual pleasures".<sup>51</sup>

Form *per se* is not a clinging but a factor that inclines one to cling,<sup>52</sup> nor is form *per se* a fetter, nor a factor that leads one to get

fettered.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, form is not a flood or a bond, but a factor that would engulf one or bind one.<sup>54</sup>

## 1.23

Both the **Cittasamyutta** and the **Vedanasamyutta** contain a dialogue explaining this difference between fetter (*samyojana*) and factors that cause to be fettered.<sup>55</sup> In the **Kotthita Sutta** it is explained thus;

"Ven. Sariputta, is the eye a fetter to form or forms are fetters to the eye? Similarly as regard to other sense faculties.

"Ven. Kotthita, eye is not a fetter to forms, forms are not fetters to the eye. But, whatever attachment that arises depending on those two, that is the fetter there". So it is with regard to ear, nose, and so on. To explain this still further the following simile is presented", If two oxen, one white and the other black, are bound by the same chain, is it proper to say that the black one is the bond of the white one and *vice versa*? No, it is not proper to say so. With whatever chain or rope they are bound that is the bond".<sup>56</sup>

## 1.24

No dukkha arises from mere form or from its enjoyment. This enjoyment makes beings grasp and cling to form. However, the true nature of all conditioned phenomena is that they are subject to rising (**uppada**) and passing away (**vaya**) and becoming otherwise whatever that exists (**thitassaññathatta**). The form arises, changes continuously and then disappears. The being addicted to enjoyment attempts to experience this enjoyment uninterruptedly. But, before he is content, the form disappears, and together with it disappears, also, his enjoyment. Due to his strong clinging he experiences great sorrow, unhappiness and worry. He forgets the real nature of the form, and besides this, he who is the enjoyer, is nothing but a bundle of name and form or mind and matter. Both the object of enjoyment and the enjoyer himself are subject to the three characteristics of compounded phenomena. Even enjoyment

is a phenomenon that undergoes constant change, and hence, there cannot be any kind of satisfactory enjoyment. In this manner due to form (rupa) there arises an aggregate of clinging, and hence one experiences suffering; this is why the aggregate of clinging, to form is declared to be a kind of suffering. This is so with regard to the other aggregates. The Noble Truth of dukkha declared by the Buddha should be understood in this manner. It is through this philosophical explanation of dukkha that the definition that in brief the five aggregates of clinging are dukkha' becomes meaningful.

### 1.25

Both the **Na santi Sutta** of the **Samyuttanikaya** and the **Nibbedhika pariyaya Sutta** of the **Anguttaranikaya** contain an explanation about the enlightened enjoyment of sensual pleasures and the Buddhist concept of sensual pleasures.

**"Sankapparago purisassa kamo  
na te kama yani citrani loke  
sankappa rago purisassa kamo  
titthanti citrani tatheva loke  
athetha dhira vinayanti chandam<sup>57</sup>**

(This manifold objects in the world.  
This in itself is not desire of sense  
Lustful intention is man's sense-desire  
The desire thereto the wise regulate)

Therefore, if one really comprehends the true nature of form, then he can enjoy it without clinging on to it. To experience enjoyment in this manner one should have completely eradicated craving for form. Due to clinging and craving there arises a conflict, a feeling of anger and hatred in him, who is misled by enjoyment. This also is a fetter caused by confusion regarding form. One who has completely eradicated ill-will, and hatred is capable of enjoying form without getting confused. Hence, he does not experience suffering.

### 1.26

Those who fail to comprehend the true nature of the world, being misled by objects and by enjoying them undergo 'dukkha', either by getting attached to them or rejecting them. The **Indriya bhavana Sutta** criticises this sort of wrong practice that was followed by a brahmin teacher named Parasariya. The following dialogue took place between the brahmin youth called Uttara, a disciple of Parasariya and the Buddha.

"Uttara, does Parasariya teach sense control to his disciples?"

"Yes"

"What does he teach?"

"Venerable Gotama, he teaches that one should refrain from seeing form with eyes, and hearing sounds with ears".

"Uttara, if that is so, the deaf and the blind could be described as having their senses under control for the deaf do not hear and the blind do not see".

Hearing this Uttara remained silent. Then the Buddha explained to Ven. Ananda what is meant by sense control according to the Buddha's teaching.

"Ananda, the brahmin Parasariya teaches his disciples the development of the sense organs in one way, but in the discipline of an aryan the incomparable development of the sense organs is otherwise ..... And what Ananda, is this incomparable development of the sense-organs? As to this Ananda, when a monk has seen a material shape with the eye there arises what is both liked and disliked. He comprehends thus; This, that is liked is arising in me, this that is disliked is arising in me... and this that arises is because it is constructed, in gross. But this is the real, this is the excellent, that is to say equanimity. So whether what is arising in him is liked, disliked or both liked and disliked it is stopped in him",<sup>58</sup> and equanimity remains. Ananda, it is as if a man with vision having opened his eyes should close them, having closed them should open them. Such is the speed and swiftness

such is the ease with which anything that has arisen..... is stopped in him and equanimity remains. This is that, what is called the incomparable development of the sense organs in regard to material shapes cognizable by the eye".

A similar description is given with regard to the other sense faculties. As Prof. Karunadasa<sup>59</sup> observes:

"The implication is that mental culture is not to be associated with the suppression of the senses. They should be cultivated to see the truth, to see things as they really are (*yathabhutam*).

### 1.27

The Buddha in the *Devadaha Sutta* explains, using an appropriate simile, what the correct attitude should be towards sense objects and their enjoyment. The Buddha says that a man who is mentally sound, greatly attached to a woman and hence having high expectations about her happens to see her being intimate with another man, would feel sad, grieved and worried. However, once he gives up his attachment to her he will feel no more sad, aggrieved or worried. This is because now he is freed of attachment to her. Therefore, the noble disciple should conduct himself in such a way not to let his unmastered self to be mastered by anguish, then he could remain without casting out rightful happiness and be undenied by that happiness.

### 1.28

As clearly evident from canonical reference the noble disciple does neither reject the objects of senses nor runs away from enjoying them. Therefore, in order to live in this world without suffering or at least minimizing suffering, one should enjoy objects of senses with this proper understanding. It is seen that one who has eradicated craving (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and confusion (*moha*) or in other words, one who has cultivated non-craving (*alobha*), non-hatred (*adosa*), and non-confusion (*amoha*) can obtain the highest enjoyment from objects of senses. The *Dhammapada*<sup>61</sup> declares how the Arahant enjoys nature in this

proper manner. "Delightful are the forests where worldlings delight not; the passionless will rejoice therein, for they seek no sensual pleasure". The *Thera gatha*<sup>62</sup> records such a detached enjoyment the Arahant Sappaka experienced.

"whenever I see the crane,  
her clean bright wings  
outstretched  
in fear to flee the black storm-cloud,  
A shelter seeking, to safe shelter borne.  
Then doth the river Ajakarani  
give joy to me".

### 1.29

This sort of noble and serene experience cannot be had as long as man has desire and such other fetters. Yet, if one has comprehended, at least to an extent, the impermanency of all phenomena, the true nature of the aggregates, then in proportion to this understanding, he would be able to enjoy the objects of senses without falling into severe *dukkha*, even though he has not completely eradicated all his fetters.

Therefore, it should be understood that the problem lies neither in the objects of senses nor in the enjoyment of pleasures derived from them. What one should realize is that as "clinging" causes fetters that produce suffering one should not cling to anything. Further, it is imperative to understand that what really obstructs the comprehension of this is one's inability to see the true nature of phenomena as impermanent, suffering and without a self.

The Buddha himself has declared that he is not frightened of any happiness if it is neither unwholesome nor given to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures.<sup>63</sup> All these facts make it clear that the Noble Truth of suffering (*dukkha*) does not advocate the view that there is no happiness in the world at all, or that one should turn a blind eye to objects of senses. It is in this spirit that the Buddha in the *Ariyawamsa Sutta*<sup>64</sup> admonishes the monks to enjoy the four basic requirements without getting addicted attached or baffled of them, seeing their evil consequences and being wise in finding a

way to give them up. A similar admonition is found in the **Gamini Samyutta**.<sup>65</sup> In this instance it was meant for the layman Rasiya Gamini.

### 1.30

The third of the three characteristics of phenomena is non-substantiality, or no-self (**anatta**). While one scholar<sup>66</sup> says that this is the most controversial of all the basic ideas of Buddhist philosophical tradition, another<sup>67</sup> points out that there is no doctrine more misunderstood and misinterpreted than this. Prof. Wijesekara<sup>68</sup> refers to the impropriety of scholars', specially of the West, in attempting to grapple with this subject without having a clear idea about it. He observes:

"It is curious how writers, particularly those of the west have plunged into discussions of this doctrine equipped with no other definition of it than the ideas of Soul or Ego borrowed from theistic and pantheistic systems of philosophy or religions as they were accustomed to before taking up the study of Buddhism".

Prof. Malalasekara<sup>69</sup> cites three meanings in which **attha** is used in the Tripitaka (1) mainly to mean oneself, one's own (eg. **attahitaya patipañño no parahitaya**, acting in one's own interest not in the interest of others or **attanava katan sadhu**, what is done by one's ownself is good). (2) meaning one's own person, the personality, including both mind and body (eg. **attabhava**, **attapatilabha**). (3) as a certain class of view which made the soul or an entity its theme (e.g. **attaditthi**, **attanuditti**, **attagaha** etc.)

It is very important to note that the term **attha** is used in the Tripitaka to mean the soul - a concept rejected by the Buddha - as well as to mean 'one's own', 'one', 'person' etc. It is now well known that scholars like J. G. Jennings, Herbert Guenther, George Grimm, Mrs. Rhys Davids and Radhakirshnan have attempted to show that Buddhism upholds the 'soul' concept. However Helmuth von Glasenapp in his **Vedanta and Buddhism**<sup>70</sup> has shown clearly the futility of all these attempts to give the soul concept a place in Buddhism.

The nature of the soul concept which was rejected by the Buddha becomes very clear from the following observation made by Ven. Prof Walpola Rahula.<sup>71</sup>

"What in general is suggested by Soul, Self, Ego or to use the Sanskrit expression **Atman**, is that in man there is a permanent, everlasting and absolute entity, which is the unchanging substance behind the changing phenomenal world. According to some religions, each individual has such a separate soul which is created by God, and which finally after death, lives eternally either in hell or heaven, its destiny depending on the judgement of its creator. According to others, it goes through many lives till it is completely purified and becomes finally united with God or Brahman, Universal Soul or Atman from which it originally emanated. This soul or self in man is the thinker of thoughts, feeler of sensations and receiver of rewards and punishments for all its actions good and bad. Such a conception is called the idea of self.

Buddhism stands unique in the history of human thought in denying the existence of such a Soul, Self, or Atman"

### 1.31

This emphasises two characteristics that is connected with the concept of the Soul. First one is the existence of an agent behind the actions. The second is its permanency. Prof. Kaluphanna<sup>72</sup> says that these are the two major characteristics of the Soul concept presented in the upanishads and that the Buddha, for valid reasons rejected both these.

The **Sabbasava Sutta**<sup>73</sup> is one of the many suttas which gives various nuances of the soul-view that occurs to the ignorant worldling, and rejects them all. Buddha shows how a false view about the self arises in the individual as to, this soul of mine which speaks, enjoys and experiences the consequences, of deeds is permanent, external and everlasting. Explaining the evil consequences that ensues from such beliefs he condemns it as a dogmatic belief, a thicket, a wilderness, contortion, a fetter of

speculations. According to the explanation given by the Buddha in this sutta an ignorant worldling continuously succumbs to all sorts of misery and unhappiness because of such a false belief.

### 1.32

Some considered the body, and some others the mind as the soul. The monk named Sati held consciousness to be the soul. In the **Mahatanhasankhaya Sutta**<sup>74</sup> the Buddha thoroughly rejects this belief and points out that consciousness is dependently arisen. The Buddha says that if it is really necessary to hold on to a belief in a soul, it is far better to consider the body which appears to exist at least for some time, as the soul than to consider the mind or consciousness which is constantly changing night and day.<sup>75</sup>

### 1.33

The individual means a succession of mind and matter or an un interrupted continuity of the five aggregates. However, this is not a denial of the existence of an individual personality. In order to clarify the Buddhist position with regard to the individual Ven. Prof Walpola<sup>76</sup> Rahula cites a saying quoted in the **Paramattha jotika** as Buddha's own words. It says: When the aggregates arise, decay and die, Bhikkhus, you are prone to decay and die." Thus it is clear that Buddhism upholds the view that the individual is constantly changing. Yet, however, as the **Assutavattu Sutta**<sup>77</sup> says in spite of constant change, this material body exists for some times even for one hundred years. In the ultimate sense none of the aggregates taken either severally or collectively is permanent. There exists nothing permanent in the aggregates or outside them.

Without accepting either the doctrine of moments or the doctrine of a 'person' (**Pudgala**), both of which are of late origin early Buddhism accepts the existence of an individual, but this is only in the conventional sense. In fact this individual is only a continuity of physical and mental forces or energies. As long as the forces of craving and clinging are not eradicated, new

aggregates come into existence when the old ones die. This is what we call life or re-becoming. In this manner we can understand the individual without resorting to the soul concept.

### 1.34

On this point Dr. Gunapala Dharmasiri<sup>78</sup> says:

"Though Buddhism does not accept the idea of a person as an enduring entity, it accepts the existence of a person as a composite factor. Two criteria are used in determining the identity of a person. A person is made up of two types of groups of events, physical and mental. As all these groups are ever changing, the preceding events disappear giving birth to succeeding events. Thus the succeeding events inherit the characteristics of the preceding events. This results in a casual sequence of events. In Buddhism, it is through this "unbroken continuity or coherence of the series of events" (**avicchinna santati samaggi**) that personal identity is graded. The person who lives at 9.00 a.m. this morning is a result of the person who lived at 7.00 a.m. this morning."

### 1.35

The Buddha, thus explaining life to be an uninterrupted continuity of a series of causes and effects, expounded the doctrine of Dependent Origination which makes other fundamental teachings such as Karma, rebirth and sansara quite meaningful. This Dependent Origination or **Paticcasamuppada**, which shows the two extremes namely, Eternalism and Annihilationism is designated the Middle Path.<sup>79</sup> It is not a kind of determinism, it accepts free will and moral responsibility of the individual. Therefore, it upholds the possibility of achieving individual welfare as well as welfare of others. Scholars like Weber,<sup>80</sup> failing to understand this fact have made observations such as the one appearing below.

"How is a sense of social responsibility resting on social ethic possible within a framework of a doctrine which considers the ego as 'a grand and pernicious basic illusion'?"

Any one who makes a historical study of Buddhist Civilization would not fail to see that the view that moral responsibility is possible only if there is a permanent soul is merely a concept that is deep rooted in a civilization that accepts such a religious belief. According to canonical teaching man, who is just a conventional concept possessing nothing permanent, and arising from a concentration of aggregates, and subject to death and rebirth, accumulates Karma. Wandering in samsara as long as the force of craving remains he being firmly established, engages himself in social activities. If one argues that as Buddhism rejects a concept of a permanent soul, all social activities become futile, the same argument also could be applied to show that all activities aimed purely at personal well being, too, are futile. The Sutta teachings make it clear that the theory of moments does not take Buddhism to the extreme of rejecting the existence of the world.

### 1.36

When we for good reasons conclude that the 'no self doctrine and social responsibility are not contradictory, we can make a further observation, that this 'no self' doctrine becomes a more useful drive than the soul concept in the socio-economic sphere.

One who accepts that there resides in oneself a 'soul' he begins to believe that this 'self' is 'oneself' and 'ones own'. He being overwhelmed by the eternalist view point strives to protect what belongs to 'I'. Being self-centered and being oppressed by severe craving, he begins a series of selfish activities and proceeds to accumulate, pile up and protect. The *Aggañña Sutta* describes how man being motivated by this feeling of 'I' and 'Mine' begins to enjoy private property, protecting it greedily, and how consequently gets spurred to numerous anti-social activities, and creates numerous divisions in the society bound on factors like complexion, and finally falls into ruin.

The man who comes into conflict with everything that stands against his egoism gets oppressed with hatred. At times, being confused, he falls into annihilationistic belief or begins to experience the evil consequences of the 'personality view'. (sakkaya

ditthi). Thus, as it is oppressing the 'self' quarrels that start on minor issues end up in world wars. Thus the 'self-view' obstructs everything that one intends doing for the sake of others.

### 1.37

On the contrary, when one gives up selfishness through the 'no-self' doctrine, there develops in one a noble personality which is extremely sensitive to social problems, giving up his feeling of 'I'-ness he begins to view everybody as a continuity of aggregates. He then decides that it is futile to engage in purely selfish activities. Deciding so, he gets interested in enjoying things in common, than in hoarding, accumulating and piling up. He, seeing that selfish protection of things merely leads to growth of harmful craving, begins to consider the whole mankind with friendliness and compassion. This makes him turn into a noble, social being. All his outer-centered activities spring from such feeling. In fact he becomes a person who has developed his personality to such a high level, that he sees no distinction between his personal well being and the well being of others. All developmental activities attain complete success because of such people.

Prof. Padmasiri de Silva,<sup>81</sup> too is of the view that there is no conflict between 'no-self' view and social activity. Drawing from the views of the well known psychologist Eric Fromm he writes:

"There is no conflict between the doctrine of Egolessness and a healthy drive for personality integration, social reform or even nation building. The doctrine of egolessness (anatta) cuts across the barriers of selfishness, greed and avarice. Egoism is a factor that separates man from man, and once this barrier is broken, healthy human relations are possible".

He further supports<sup>82</sup> his view quoting Eric Fromm:

"Fromm says that the essential teachings of all humanistic religions in the world can be summarised in one sentence. It is the goal of man to overcome one's narcissism, perhaps this principle is nowhere expressed more radically than in Buddhism". Fromm concluding on these lines says that if man sheds the illusions of

this indestructible ego and the other objects of greed, only then can he be totally open, awake and fully related to the world".

Prof. Silva points out<sup>83</sup> that Fromm's reference is to the Buddhist concept of 'no-self'.

"The illusion of the indestructible ego that Fromm mentions is quite clearly a reference to the Buddhist doctrine of Anatta (egolessness). There is no ego entity existing, apart and independently of these physical and mental processes that constitute life".

Then Prof. Silva<sup>84</sup> goes on to explain how the 'no-self' concept lays a sound foundation for community life.

"Human relations based on a purely symbolic nature or dependence and domination should be replaced by mature relationships between man and man. Pride, vanity, conceit, and jealousy are unwholesome states that block the free flow of genuine concern, respect, love and understanding. The doctrine of "egolessness" in this sense certainly provides an admirable base for group living."

From this it is clear that in Buddhism there is no conflict, as Weber attempts to show, between 'no-self' doctrine and social responsibility. On the contrary it is seen that this 'no-self' concept while producing a noble person with a perfected personality, organizes also the socio-economic activities by providing a beneficial foundation.

#### 1.38

There is another factor that should be emphasised before concluding this discussion on the three characteristics. These three characteristics could not and should not be analysed independent of each other. Their mutual relation is emphasised in the Tripitaka itself. It is often seen how wrong conclusions are made by treating them separately. The fundamental characteristic of all compounded phenomena is impermanency, or change. The Noble Truth of Dukkha is founded on this fundamental characteristic. In fact this teaching regarding impermanency or change itself is the 'no-self' teaching.

### III. THE RELATION BETWEEN MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

#### 1.39

When we discuss about the world we generally tend to divide it into two either as North and South, developed and undeveloped or as developed and developing or under-developed. Usually, the developed countries are referred to as the 'First world' and the 'Second world', while the developing countries are called the 'Third world'. The countries that belong to the developed category are America, Canada, Great Britain, Soviet Union, Western European countries, Japan and so on. In these countries all human requisites namely, food, shelter, clothing, transport, health facilities, educational opportunities are well provided for. Besides, in these countries there are various communication facilities, avenues for pleasure and enjoyment, as well as numerous ways of spending leisure and vacation. It is seen that people of these countries are even engaged in conquering space.<sup>85</sup>

Yet in these countries where industrial, scientific and technological advancement has reached the apex, giving the people the maximum benefit of such advancement, there exist also a very high rate of murder, crime, rape, divorce, drug addiction, mental diseases, generation conflict, anxiety and nuclear threat - which are all obvious features of man's degeneration and decline, reflecting a complete contrast with the apparent progress.

This conflicting state that prevails in the world has caught the attention of the former Soviet Union President Mihail Gorbachev.<sup>86</sup>

"The progress of humanity is also directly connected with the scientific and technological revolution. It nurtured slowly and gradually, and then, in the final quarter of the century, gave the start to a gigantic increase of man's material and spiritual possibilities. These are of a twofold nature. There is a qualitative leap in humanity's productive forces. But there is also a qualitative leap in means of destruction, in the military sphere, 'endowing' man for the first time in history with the physical capacity for destroying all life on earth."

While all the 'forces of production' referred to herein reflect man's technological advancement, the forces that lead to the total wiping out of beings from the face of earth show his spiritual degeneration.

Any critical observer of the world will clearly notice the prevalence of two characteristics in the world; one is the material progress, and the other mental progress. Prof. Fritjof Capra who has noticed this contradiction and who is convinced of the necessity of bringing about a fine balance between them has made the following observation in Schumacher Lectures.<sup>87</sup>

"All this suggest a profound imbalance in our culture, in our thoughts and feelings, our values and attitudes, and our social and political structures. Further reflections show that roots of this cultural crises lie in the imbalance between two modes of consciousness which have been recognized as characteristic aspects of human nature through the ages. They are usually called the rational and intuitive modes, and have also been described by various other terms - masculine/feminine, linear/ nonlinear and so on. The Chinese have called them Yang and Yin. They never saw them as experiences belonging to separate categories but always as two sides of the same reality, extreme parts of a single whole.

Then the question that arises spontaneously is, whether material progress and spiritual progress are two mutually unrelated or even mutually contradictory extremes.

#### 1.40

Since ancient times, stretching back to thousands of years, numerous religions have appeared from time to time in the world for the purpose of leading man to civilization, development, freedom and salvation. There are a few common allegations levelled against these religious beliefs. Among them the main allegation in brief is that 'these religions are more concerned with supramundane matters than with mundane affairs; believe in things more connected with the next life than with this life; neglect the material aspect of life and emphasise the spiritual aspect'.

Prof. Padmasiri de Silva,<sup>88</sup> who considers this uncertainty between the emphasis laid on secular and spiritual problems of man as a feature common to all religions, suggests the necessity of a dialogue on the subject.

#### 1.41

The criticism levelled against Buddhism in this regard is of special importance, and arguments adduced by such scholars as Max Weber, Melford E. Spiro deserve special attention. Heinz Bechert<sup>89</sup> supports the Weberian view point in the following manner.

"Buddhism has rightly been characterised as a non-political or even anti-political religious movement of highly intellectual mendicants by Max Weber.... and, by other authors. As such, early Buddhism has no direct connection with social forces or movements. As only goal being release from the forces of Karma and rebirth, it can be described as other-worldly or more exactly "Supramundane" (lokottara). Under these conditions, no particular concepts of social order of the laity, family structure, system of law etc., were put forward by early Buddhists, though the basic codes of moral conduct preached by the Buddha are applicable to all spheres of life. These codes were, however, of a very general nature, with detailed descriptions being reserved for the code of conduct of the Sangha i.e., the monastic order of the Buddhist monks and nuns. Relations between Sangha and laity were rather informal and on a personal basis. There was no successor to the Buddha as the leader of the Sangha."

When considering these criticisms levelled against religions in general, and against Buddhism in particular, the same question that was raised before crops up once again - whether material progress and spiritual progress are two separate goals to be realized by following two different paths.

#### 1.42

If one were to consider that they are two different goals, then there arises another heap of related questions. Dr. Guruge's<sup>90</sup>

remark cited earlier (vide 1.13) is of much significance on this point. Can the poor afford to direct their attention to religions that are not concerned with material progress? What other salvation is there for them other than the immediate beneficial results obtained by embracing a religion that promises material well being?

Dr. Gunapala Dharmasiri<sup>91</sup> examining the roles of Buddhism and Marxism in the socio-cultural context of Sri Lanka, raises this query:

"..... Marxism offers itself as one of the best solutions for the economic and social problems of the contemporary world. Marxist ideas have provided fruitful methods in the world for ameliorating the social conditions of the poor and working class people. Considering the complexity of economic problems the Third World is facing today many people think that Marxism is the only salvation for such countries and many governmental policies in under-developed countries have been significantly influenced by Marxist theory and ideology. If Marxism can be one of the most effective or the only solution for the economic problems of countries like Sri Lanka would the existing cultural institutions like Buddhism come into conflict with the ideals of Marxism."

This observation makes clear how timely and relevant it is to discuss the question, raised earlier in connection with the developed countries, in relation to the Third World countries, also.

If it is true that Buddhism considers material progress as an obstacle to spiritual progress then there is no possibility of discussing about a Buddhist economic philosophy. This impossibility is the fact that Weberian thought is trying to establish in the minds of the intelligent people.

Is the path taught by the Buddha and presented in the canon, a path leading to a conflict between material and spiritual progress? We have to be cautious in examining this question. In such an examination, if it becomes clear that material progress and spiritual progress are two conflicting extremes, then there should not be any hesitation in admitting that Buddhism is a religion that is not suitable for the modern times. If the position is otherwise, then the Weberian view point should necessarily be rejected.

#### 1.43

There is a Sutta in the *Anguttara nikaya* which so far has not received adequate attention of scholars. This is the *Andha (Dvicakku) Sutta*<sup>92</sup> which speaks of three categories of people namely, the blind, the one-eyed and the two-eyed. Therein the two eyed person is described as one who knows to attain material progress as well as spiritual progress. The Sutta emphatically says that one should discard both the blind and the one eyed persons; the best among these three is the two-eyed person whom one should associate. It is necessary to pay special attention to this admonition of the Buddha given at the end of the Sutta.<sup>93</sup>

Acquisition and increasing of wealth means the realization of material progress. This is equal to having only one eye. The knowledge regarding what is wholesome and unwholesome, good and bad is the other eye. This Sutta deplores both types of people namely, those who are totally blind and those who possess only one of the two above mentioned eyes. The ones who are praised are those who possess both eyes, and this clearly demonstrates how much Buddhism values the balanced development of material and spiritual aspects.

#### 1.44

This is not the only Sutta that expresses this idea. The *Vaddhi Sutta*<sup>94</sup> also of the *Anguttara nikaya* which too has not received the attention it deserves, emphasises a similar view. This Sutta mentions ten aspects in which a person prospers. These are lands and fields, wealth and corn, wife and family and servants, cattle, confidence, virtue, learning, charity and wisdom.

The first five items referred to in this Sutta pertain to material progress and the remaining five to spiritual progress; and from this it is very clear that the Buddha emphasised the development of both these aspects. This two fold progress is referred to as the progress of the 'noble' and this is evident from the use of such terms as '*ariyasavako*' '*ariyaya vaddhiya*'. The phrase *Saradayi ca hoti varadayi kayassa* too is indicative of the fact; this progress means the nourishment of the body as well as the achievement of noble well being.

#### 1.45

The **Mahacattarisaka Sutta** of the **Majjhima nikaya** is also of special significance on this point. This sutta speaks of two modes of accomplishing the Noble Eightfold Path. One is the mode consisting of defilement and partaking merit (**sasava puññabhagiya**) and bringing to maturity bondages. It is this mode that could be practised while leading a household life, realizing material progress and gradually reaching spiritual purity. (for details see section IV).

#### 1.46

It is relevant at this point to consider the Buddha's explanation of the doctrine of Karma and consequences. For this purpose it is even sufficient to examine the **Sila Sutta** and **Mettanisansa Sutta** of the **Anguttara nikaya**. The **Sila Sutta**<sup>95</sup> mentions five bad consequences of evil conduct. These are (i) destruction of wealth due to headlessness (2) spread of ill-fame (3) experiencing of fear and doubt when appearing in public (4) becoming confused at the time of death and (5) rebirth in hell. The five consequences of good conduct are: (i) increase of wealth (2) spread of fame (3) ability to face public with self-assurance and confidence (4) mindfulness at the time of death and (5) birth in heaven after death.

If we consider these consequences in the given order, it appears that the first pertains to economics, second and third to social life, fourth to psychological sphere and the fifth to religious sphere. Similarly, the first four pertain to this world and the fifth to the world after. It is important also to note that the economic factor heads the list.

The **Mettanisamsa Sutta**<sup>96</sup> too, tends to lead to a similar conclusion. It enumerates eleven good qualities of friendliness (**metta**). It says that one who cultivates friendliness (1) sleeps comfortably (2) rises up comfortably (3) dreams no bad dreams (4) becomes dear to humans (5) becomes dear to non-humans (6) is protected by gods (7) not harmed by fire, poison and weapons etc. (8) is able to concentrate the mind (9) has a pleasant

appearance (10) dies without being confused, and (11) if fails to attain any stage in the path, finds rebirth in the Brahma-world.

Of these the first ten belong to this world, and the eleventh to the next world; the eighth and the tenth are mental; the eleventh religious and the rest pertain to personal and social life and are concerned with material aspects. This makes it clear that the Buddha even in his analysis of the doctrine of Karma and consequences emphasises not only the spiritual consequence but also material and economic consequences, perhaps at times, laying more emphasis on the latter aspect.

#### 1.47

Thus, all the evidence presented so far prove that views put forward by Weber, Spiro and Bechert are totally against the Buddha's view. If Buddhism gives equal importance to both material and spiritual progress, then why do scholars, as those mentioned above, persist in levelling criticisms against Buddhism? With regard to this a researcher in Buddhist studies says that there is a teaching of the Buddha which the world has not so far implemented with proper understanding. He<sup>97</sup> says:

"Here the Buddha was making two very important points which mankind has not still properly grouped and implemented. Firstly that human happiness cannot be achieved either by spiritual upliftment alone or by material advancement alone; and both these aspects must be looked after with equal emphasis in order to make man happy. Our own age proves the validity of this agreement beyond all doubt. The section of the economically affluent world today has almost completely disregarded spiritual values, but neglected, often due to reasons beyond their control, material aspects of life with the result that both the rich and the poor are unhappy".

This above misunderstanding by the learned has caused confusion in the average individual too. As a consequence this has not only caused injustice to Buddhism, but has also prevented mankind from reaping maximum benefit from Buddhism. Though

the problem is somewhat clear now, yet it deserves further discussion.

#### 1.48

In the Suttas there is a saying of the Buddha which scholars refer to as 'the concept of twin-welfare' (**ubhayattha**). Commenting on this Ven. Dr. K. Anuruddha<sup>98</sup> says:

"It is true that certain religions teach that we should be concerned not about this life, but about the next. However, it has to be strongly emphasized here that Buddhism, while assuring results in this very life, does by no means devalue progress in this life. This could be properly understood through the Buddhist concept of twin-welfare (**ubhayattha**) which means mundane welfare as well as supra-mundane welfare. Mundane welfare includes welfare in this world and also welfare in the next world. Similarly it implies also well being of oneself and well being of others. Hence it is clear that Buddhism does not advocate either well being in the next life or supra-mundane well being at the expense of well being in this life".

The **Vyagghapajja Sutta**<sup>99</sup> records how Dighajanu, a member of the Koliya clan, approaches the Buddha and makes the following requests:

"Sir, we are householders given to enjoyment of pleasures. We are burdened with wives and children. We adorn ourselves with silks from Kasi, use fragrant sandalwood and wear garlands. We adorn ourselves with gold and silver ornaments. Please preach to us a doctrine that would be for our well being in this life as well as for our well being in the next life".

The Buddha heeded the request and preached about four factors that are conducive to the happiness and well being in this life. These factors are: i. bliss of vigour (**utthana sampada**) (ii) bliss of protection (**arakkha sampada**) (iii) good friendship (**kalyana mittata**) and (iv) balanced life (**samajivikata**). The Buddha followed this by preaching yet another four factors leading to happiness and well being in the next life. These four factors are:

Confidence (**saddha**) ii. morality (**sila**) iii. charity (**caga**) and iv. wisdom (**pañña**).

Herein both categories of factors find equal emphasis; good friendship pertaining to social relations and the other three to economic well being. The latter four factors are mainly concerned with spiritual purity. **Ujjaya sutta**,<sup>100</sup> too presents a similar teaching.

#### 1.49

According to the **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>101</sup> a noble disciple who refrains from verbal and bodily evil actions, gives up four biases (**agati**) closes the six avenues of waste of wealth, is a person who has set out to the conquest of both worlds. He is an accomplished person, both in this world and in the next. After death he will be born in heaven. Herein, the Buddha shows that the aim of a noble follower of the noble discipline is the 'conquest of both worlds'.

#### 1.50

The **Anana Sutta**<sup>102</sup> addressed to Anathapindika refers to four kinds of happiness to be enjoyed by the pleasure loving layman. They are namely happiness of (i) righteous earning (**atthi sukha**) (ii) righteous enjoyment (**bhoga Sukha**) (iii) being debtless (**anana sukha**) and (iv) being free of corrupt practices (**anavajja sukha**). The first three pertain to material or economic well being. The fourth paves the way for spiritual progress.

The **Pattakamma Sutta**<sup>103</sup> also preached to Anathapindika, is concerned with an individual's material, economic and social well being. These include righteous earning, enjoyment of the same righteously in the company of relatives and friends, longevity and peaceful death. Thus, Buddhism while holding that laymen's material progress has to be achieved, adds that four other requisitions should be joined to this. These are confidence, morality, charity and wisdom. The **Vyagghapajja Sutta** is very emphatic on this point.

It is interesting to note that while some of the above mentioned Suttas namely, **Dvicakkhu**, **Vaddhi**, **Mahacattarisaka** were

addressed to monks, other suttas like **Vyagghapajja**, **Ujjaya**, **Sigalovada**, **Anana** and **Pattakamma** were preached to laymen. Thus it is seen that the concept of 'twin well being' is preached to both monks and lay, and in this concept are embodied both the worldly material, economic progress and the spiritual supra-mundane progress.

#### 1.51

Besides emphasizing this balanced progress of material and spiritual well-being Buddhism also holds economic development as an essential prerequisite for spiritual progress.

In the **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>104</sup> the Buddha declares, in an emphatic tone, that one becomes capable of leading a family life by accumulation of wealth. As shown before, in many of the above mentioned Suttas, economic stability is given priority.

#### 1.52

This is very clearly stated in the **Ina Sutta**<sup>105</sup> wherein it is mentioned that poverty is a cause of great misery for the pleasure-enjoying laymen. To make this clear the Sutta describes the many hardships a debtor has to face. Therefore, people are advised to accumulate wealth in their youth, when they find themselves strong enough for this task. The **Dhammapada**<sup>106</sup> says:

"They who have not led the holy life, who in youth not acquired wealth, pine away like old herons at a pond without fish".

The same source further emphasizes this point.

"They who have not led the holy life, who in youth have not acquired wealth, live like worn-out bows, sighing after the past".<sup>107</sup> A similar sentiment is expressed in the **Jansandha Jataka** too.<sup>108</sup>

#### 1.53

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that Buddhism considers material progress not merely as a necessity for laymen, but on the real foundation of the activity of life. Then what is the position with regard to the life of monks? The **Dasadhamma Sutta**<sup>109</sup> says

that a monk should constantly reflect that 'my life is dependent on others'. This suggests the lay people have to provide the basic necessities to help sustain the life of monks who are not engaged in activities connected with production. This is also clear from the explanation made to Anathapindika that the right course of action of the laity is to provide with four basic necessities for monks.<sup>110</sup> The **Asamaya-Samaya Sutta**<sup>111</sup> says that a period of famine is not a good time for a monk to strive to attain salvation. Many other suttas such as **Pattakamma**, **Pancabhogadiya** also emphasize this as a duty of the lay<sup>112</sup> people.

#### 1.54

In the **Dvicakkhu Sutta**<sup>113</sup> it is said that the one-eyed person is capable of amassing wealth through corrupt means, using falsehood and consequently destroying himself by falling into hell. This makes it clear that economic gain obtained without paying due consideration of spiritual development brings about an individual's ruin. Herein it is also mentioned that one attains greatness only by acquiring wealth through effort, righteousness without doubt and through noble thoughts. What is emphasized in the **Pattakamma Sutta** is not the mere acquisition of wealth, but righteous acquisition of wealth. Therefore the Buddhist concept is that the economy should be the foundation of an individual's personality development, and that it should be properly tempered with spiritual training.

#### 1.55

Is this blending of material progress with spiritual progress a mere idealistic concept? When examining the Buddhist analysis of "truth" it is seen that Buddhism considers pragmatism as a characteristic of 'truth'. Have there not been individuals who have attained progress in both these spheres? Have there not been societies that achieved a fine blend of these two aspects?

Anathapindika was a multi-millionaire who had the economic strength to spend a vast sum of money to buy a block of land to build a monastery called Jetavanarama. This he offered to the

Buddha and the community of monks. He listened to the doctrine and attained the stage of a stream-entrant (*sotapanna*). Kingship was not an obstacle for Bimbisara's attainment of the same spiritual state.<sup>115</sup> Visakha was the daughter of a rich merchant. She became a *sotapanna* and then married, gave birth to children and successfully carried out all the household management in a non-Buddhist family. All throughout her life she was a dedicated female lay devotee. Other than the Buddhahood Arahantship is the highest stage of spiritual advancement mentioned in the Pali canon. The spiritual advancement consists of different stages reached by an individual, according to one's own ability, in the march along the spiritual path. The Pali canon refers to poor people as well as to numerous members of the royalty and other higher strata of society who attained these different spiritual stages. Among them some were members of the community of monks and some belonged to the laity.

#### 1.56

Even though this is mentioned in the canon can we accept this as a historical fact? This could be a subject for a prolonged debate and certainly it is worthy of being debated. Yet, here we have to be content with a few examples, for our main focus is on some other subject.

When examining the pre-European period of the history of Sri Lanka, the irrigational network and the architectural remains of monasteries and stupas bear evidence to the fact that the Sinhalese people of that time had reached the highest point of material and economic development known to mankind then. Other literary and cultural sources as well as numerous local and foreign records speak eloquently about the high level of spiritual attainment of the Sinhalese people. An inscription that exists even at present in the ancient monastic building called the "Hetadageya" at Polonnaruwa reveals the peace, calm and safety that prevailed in Sri Lanka, where

the people were enjoying the maximum benefits of a complex irrigational network. This inscription states that the Kingdom was so safe and free of all crimes and corruptions that a woman could go about safely at will, carrying a casket filled with nine kinds of precious stones.<sup>116</sup>

#### 1.57

The Indian social organization which Emperor Asoka built under the influence of Buddhism is a definite proof on an ancient society consisting of both material and spiritual development. Prof. D. J. Kalupahana<sup>117</sup> in a paper presented at a conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists held in Colombo in 1984 says:

"It is the feeling of love, the sense of compassion and the element of understanding that served as the pillars on which the great Indian Emperor Dharmasoka built his empire. Asoka's activities in promoting the material and spiritual progress of his subjects are known to us from the available historical records. His was an attempt to emulate the ideal of a universal monarch outlined in the discourse quoted above. Buddhist monarchs since Asoka have tried to follow his example. In Sri Lanka massive man-made reservoirs with equally imposing dagabas (stupas) on their banks are symbolic representations of that ideal in practice".

Such instances can be cited from Buddhist countries such as Myanmar, Thailand and Japan. In fact it is possible, by examining such historically true societies, to find out how the material and spiritual progress came to be blended according to Buddhist principles. Capra has shown how, while these two aspects appear as two opposing ideals in Western culture, they form a unified goal in Buddhist countries such as China and those in the East.

#### 1.58

When considered historically the blending of these two aspects appears as a practicable reality in simple societies. Yet it is a question whether this could be accomplished in modern extremely complex societies which have been almost terrified by

technological advancements. Whether this is practicable and whether this should be practised are two questions that should be examined separately. However, it is appropriate to present a few examples which suggest that this could be done in the modern world. The following excerpts from *Small is Beautiful* by Schumacher<sup>118</sup> are relevant to this question. He says:

"Buddhist countries have often stated that they wish to remain faithful to their heritage. The New Burma sees no conflict between religious values and economic progress. Spiritual health and mental well being are not enemies; they are mutual allies. We can blend successfully the religious and spiritual values of our heritage with the benefits of modern technology. We Burmese have a sacred duty to conform both our dreams and our acts to our faith. This we shall ever do".

He further offers the following advice to the modern world. "Before they dismiss Buddhist economics as nothing better than a nostalgic dream, they might wish to consider whether the path of economic development outlined by modern economics is likely to lead them to places where they really want to be".<sup>119</sup>

Prof. Capra has made reference to the Governor of California who attempted to model the economy of his State in accordance with the principles enunciated by Schumacher.

### 1.59

The Sarvodaya Movement of Sri Lanka has made and attempt to put into practice "Right Livelihood". Prof. Kalupahana says:<sup>120</sup>

"The leader of the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne was one of the few who, long before Schumacher made his discovery of the essence of Buddhist economics, realized, the value of his ancient heritage and began working with the villagers rather than the townfolk to bring about an understanding of the value of "Theory of Surplus Value", in the hope that this would influence the thinking of the world community to work towards a goal where personally awakening of the individual, group

awakening of the family and small communities and awakening of national communities is a balanced way so that peace, brotherhood and cooperation can be a reality within our own life time".

### 1.60

The scholars show that even in this complex world of ours there are nations and individuals who are courageous enough to put into practice the Buddhist principles of economics. Any state or an organization that has fully well grasped the worth of these principles can, irrespective of their being Buddhist nations and organizations or not, successfully put these principles into operation. This will be the foundation for the development of the whole mankind. The former Governor of Central Bank of Sri Lanka Dr. H. N. S. Karunatileke<sup>121</sup> makes the following observation:

"The Buddha offers a philosophy for a new economic order which would help to put man on the correct path. It offers a right course of action for man even if he has followed on the wrong path for a long time".

The summary of the foregoing discussion could be given thus:

- I (a) The Nikaya texts equally emphasise the importance of material development and spiritual development for personality culture and social progress.
- (b) While material and spiritual prosperity is the foundation of development, spiritual progress is its upper part.
- (c) Even the economy has to be planned under the guidance of spiritual purity.

### II. This canonical teaching

- (a) is not a mere ideal, but a teaching that has been put into practice and a teaching capable of being practised in the present world.

- (b) The views Weber and such other scholars have expressed regarding material/economic/worldly matters in order to criticize the Buddhist view point merely make known their ignorance of canonical teachings or their ruthlessness in distorting the facts.

#### 1.61

Hence the task of the Buddhist researcher should be to clarify the Buddhist economic thought. As Prof. Padmasiri de Silva says<sup>122</sup> this is a task of great importance.

"The time is ripe and opportune for Buddhists in Sri Lanka to say not merely that either 'the economic factor is important or 'unimportant' but to show how the Buddhists can accommodate, absorb and enhance the economic activities of man. This is the challenge that Schumacher offers in his inquiry into "Buddhist economics". No one seems to think that a Buddhist way of life would call for Buddhist economics".

### IV. THE CONCEPT OF KARMA AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

#### 1.62

In his book, *Buddhism and Society*<sup>123</sup> Melford Spiro makes the following statement.

"Involvement in the world is more than religiously neutral, it is religiously perilous. Even moral behaviour is an obstacle to salvation, since it leads to the accumulation of merit and hence continuation of Karma and the cycle of rebirth. The true Buddhist is one who abandons all ties and attachments and wanders alone like the rhinoceros".

It is seen that the Karma concept is prevalent in many Indian religions. As pointed out by Prof. K. N. Jayatilleke<sup>124</sup> it is primarily necessary to understand that the Buddhist teaching on Karma differs from the Vedic, Hindu, Jaina and Ajivaka teachings on it. Unless this understanding is there one gets confused and presents one's own misconceived view as the Buddhist teachings. A proper

grasp of the Karma doctrine as found in the Nikayas reveals the utter confusion into which Spiro has fallen.

If one were to accept Spiro's view as it is, then one has to conclude that a Buddhist, leave aside the economic activities, cannot perform any kind of social activity. There are other writers who hold views similar to those of Spiro.<sup>125</sup>

#### 1.63

The Buddha's definition of Karma given in the *Nibbedikapariyaya Sutta*<sup>126</sup> is quite well-known. Therein the Buddha explains that 'volition is karma'. Therefore all volitional acts performed through the body, speech and mind are called Karma. In the *Chullakamma Vibhanga Sutta*<sup>127</sup> the Buddha addressing a young man called Todeyya says:

"Beings are in possession of their own Karma; they are heirs to Karma; they have Karma as their matrix, as their relations, and their refuge. Karma divides beings into high and low".

When requested by the Youth for further clarification the Buddha explains that as a consequence of murder one's life-span becomes short and when one abstains from murder he enjoys longevity; similarly violence to beings brings about ill-health, non-violence causes good health, conceit brings about birth in low casts and humility causes the opposite consequences and so on. This is said to be the reason for the diversity seen among human beings.<sup>128</sup>

There are some who, by reading this Sutta, jumps into the conclusion that the Buddhist teaching on Karma is deterministic. There are many conclusions open to them. They can conclude that if all volitional acts lead to accumulation of consequences, and if rebirth is decided by Karma, then beings are controlled by their past Karma. If so a being has no freedom of thought to consider about the actions he performs. This leads not only to determinism, but also to a belief in the inefficiency of action (*akiriya-vada*). Further, they can conclude also that man has no free will, he has no way of escaping the consequences of past Karma, and therefore,

he cannot hope for salvation; cannot even change his present condition. Man should, therefore, be satisfied with his lot and should not question **status quo** of the society, but accept what prevails. As all volitional acts bring about either good or bad consequences man should remain inactive and, therefore, the best religious policy to be adopted is to leave the society in order to obtain salvation. One can in this manner come to conclusions which represent Karma doctrine as obstructing all socio-economic activities and progress.

#### 1.64

Amongst the numerous suttas in the **Anguttara nikaya** dealing with the doctrine of Karma there is one called **Kammanidana Sutta**<sup>129</sup> which deserves special concern. According to this Sutta there are six mental states that operate as root causes of Karma. There are craving (lobha), hatred (dosa) and confusion (moha) and their opposites namely non-craving (**alobha**), non-hatred (**adosa**) and non-confusion (**amoha**). Further, it explains that due to the first three causes the doer obtains a bad destiny and due to the next three he obtains a good destiny. This shows that one's destiny or **gati**, as it is called in Pali, depends on one's Karma. This shows a process that is not controlled by any external power but depends on one's own responsibility. According to this it becomes clear that it is one's own action that either defiles or purifies oneself, and one cannot make another clean.<sup>130</sup> Hence, the Buddhist teaching is that one is one's own saviour, for what other saviour there would be when one is well controlled one really obtains a saviour that is difficult to find.<sup>131</sup> The Buddhas are only Guides, each one has to tread the path by himself.<sup>132</sup>

#### 1.65

The Buddha rejects the teaching which accepts that everything happens according to one's past karma. This he says is a heretical teaching. The **Titthayatana Sutta**<sup>133</sup> clearly states this fact and explains how those who hold the view that everything, one experiences in the present is due to one's past actions (**Pubbekatahetuvada**) lose all their moral responsibility and free

will, and also how moral life becomes futile for them. In his advice to Moliyasivaka, a wandering Jaina ascetic who believed in **Pubbekatahetuvada**, the Buddha says that one who accepts such a deterministic view is a person who oversteps what is quite apparent. To explain the fallacy of such a belief the Buddha points out eight possible causes that could bring about such present experiences<sup>134</sup>. The general tendency is to regard past deeds as Karma. But not only past deeds, even the present ones are relevant to understand the real meaning of Karma. The emphasis laid by the Buddha on present deeds is clear from such Suttas as **Aggañña** and **Vasala**. Prof. Malalasekara<sup>135</sup> stresses this point as follows:

"Karma does not mean only past actions. It embraces both past and present deeds. Hence in one sense we are the result of what we were; We shall be the result of what we are. In another sense, it should be added, we are not totally the result of what we were, we shall not absolutely be the result of what we are. The present is the parent of the future, but the present is not always a true index of either the past or the future. So complex is the working of Karma".

Ven. Narada also in his book **The Buddha and His Teaching** emphasises this fact. The **Aggañña Sutta**<sup>136</sup> while rejecting the Brahmanic view about divine creation of caste division, explains how different functions and professions led to the rise of functional divisions among men, and stress the importance of the present deeds. The **Vasala Sutta**,<sup>137</sup> too holds the same view.

#### 1.66

The **Phalupajivi Sutta**<sup>138</sup> of the **Anguttara nikaya** is also important when one considers about the present life. Herein the Buddha refers to four kinds of people. They are (1) Those who make their living not through Karma, but through effort. (2) Those who make their living not through effort but through Karma. (3) Those who make their living through both these. (4) Those who make their living through neither of these.

The man has the strength to either intensify, reduce or destroy the consequences of past deeds. An analysis of the four factors

known as **Kala, gati, upadhi** and **payoga** shows this (This would be dealt with later).

#### 1.67

Buddhism accepts that man is able to choose between alternatives and hence, free-will plays a major role in Buddhism. The belief in moral responsibility of an individual for his action is based as this acceptance. The **Attakara Sutta**<sup>139</sup> contains a discussion between the Buddha and a Brahmin on free will. The Brahmin who did not accept the efficacy of action said he believes, neither in personal action (self-agency) or action of others (external agency). The Buddha, with the help of a simple example presented in a very effective manner, demonstrated the fallacy of this belief by questioning the Brahmin as to how he could deny the efficacy of action when he himself is able to move about to and fro according to his own free will. The Buddha further convinced the Brahmin about the existence of initiative effort (**arabbha dhatu**) which is none other than free will. The Buddha employed a few more concepts such as element of endurance (**nikkama dhatu**) element of endeavour (**parakkama dhatu**) element of resistance (**thama dhatu**) element of persistence (**thiti dhatu**) all of which go to prove the existence of free will in the individual.

#### 1.68

The following statement is found in a sutta in the **Anguttara nikaya**

"O" Bhikkhus, give up what is unwholesome (**akusala**). It is possible to give up what is unwholesome. If it is not possible, I would not ask you to abandon it. I ask you to do so because it is possible to abandon what is unwholesome. Moreover if this unwholesomeness when abandoned happens to contribute to your suffering, to your ill being, I would not ask you to abandon it. As its abandonment conduces to your happiness, I ask you to abandon it.<sup>140</sup>

In the same manner the Buddha goes on to describe about the cultivation of what is wholesome (**kusala**). Ven Gnanaponika<sup>141</sup> makes the following comment on this passage:

"This text proclaims in simple and memorable words one's potential for achieving the good, thus invalidating the oft-heard charge that Buddhism is pessimistic. These hope inspiring words of the Buddha about man's positive potential will receive their tremendous significance and their full range if we remember that the words wholesome and unwholesome are not limited to a narrow moral application".

From the said passage it becomes evident also that man is capable of exercising his free will and achieving a desired goal and that it is his own responsibility to do so.

#### 1.69

The **Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta**<sup>142</sup> explains the Noble Truth of Arising out of Suffering (**Dukkha samudaya Ariya Sacca**) as craving (**tanha**) producing rebecoming and which is bound up with passionate greed, which finds delight now here, now there namely thirst or craving for sense-pleasures (**kama tanha**), thirst for existence (**bhava tanha**) and thirst for non-existence (**vibhava tanha**). Herein thirst for sense pleasure means attachment to sensory objects. The thirst pertaining to eternalistic view is thirst for existence, and thirst related to annihilationistic view is thirst for non-existence. Through this manifold thirst or craving, which is being led by ignorance, Karma is accumulated. As long as accumulation of Karma continues there is rebecoming, and hence, there is continuity of sansaric existence. If this is so, there arises another problem connected with the functioning of karma. If accumulation of Karma takes place due to volitional actions, how could this Karma generating process be stopped? Do all Karma produce consequences? If as stated in the **Kammavidana Sutta** all actions motivated through non-craving, non-hatred and non-confusion one obtains a good destiny - that is rebirth, in the sphere of gods or humans, does not this cause continuity of sansaric

existence? If this process continues in this manner, how could the desired salvation be realized? Would not one have to go on experiencing the endless consequences of past Karma?

#### 1.70

When trying to solve these problems one should bear in mind an important factor regarding the Buddhist concept of Karma. Though Karma concept is not a great puzzle, it is also not as simple as some critics consider it to be. Its complexity is fully comprehended only by the Buddha. It is doubtful whether even an Arahant, who has attained super cognitive powers that surpasses the ordinary human knowledge, could really grasp its complexity. This fact is made clear in the **Maha-Kammavibhanga Sutta**. When analysing this Sutta it becomes clear why the doctrine of Karma and its correlation to consequences is classed as 'unthinkable (*acinteyya*)'.<sup>143</sup>

The **Maha Kammavibhainga Sutta**<sup>144</sup> categorises the individuals into four groups in accordance with the way they experience the consequences of their deeds. (1) The individuals who are born in bad destinies as consequences of their unwholesome deeds in this life such as killing (2) those individuals who, in spite of their unwholesome deeds done in this life, find rebirth in good destinies. (3) those who abstain from unwholesome deeds in this life and are reborn in good destinies, and (4) those who, in spite of their abstention from unwholesome deeds in this life, are reborn in bad destinies. One who sees only the first category of individual through his super cognitive power arrives at a wrong conclusion regarding the correlation between Karma and consequences (*vipaka*). This is because of his limited vision. The Sutta ends with the following declaration.

"Ananda, there is the deed that is inoperative, apparently inoperative; there is the deed that is inoperative, apparently operative; there is the deed that is both operative and apparently operative; there is the deed that is operative and apparently inoperative".<sup>145</sup>

#### 1.71

If all Karma produce consequences how can one put an end to Karma? When finding an answer to this, three Suttas in **Anguttara nikaya** become important. The Nikaya do not present a teaching which says that all Karmas have consequences. The **Kammanidana Sutta** points out that deeds motivated by the root causes of evil, produce evil results leading one to unhappy states. Deeds motivated by their opposites produce only wholesome mental states and these lead an individual to happy destinies. The **Akusalamula Sutta** bring to light another fact. It says that deeds motivated by non-craving, non-hatred and non-confusion destroy the evil, unwholesome tendencies in a person, and they never rise again just as a palm that has its base destroyed. Such a person is said to live happy in this very life without vexation, tribulation and distress. He realizes **Parinibbana** in this very life.<sup>146</sup> The **Nidana Sutta** of the **Anguttara nikaya** presents a still more important fact. This is that craving, hatred and confusion lead to accumulation of Karma which are evil. However, Karma motivated by their opposites are not evil, but wholesome, producing happy consequences. Not only that, they do not lead to accumulation of Karma. Instead they lead to cessation of Karma. This makes it clear that deeds motivated by non-craving, non-hatred and non-confusion do not produce Karma forces that prolong continuity in *samsara*, but lead one towards *Nibbana*.

#### 1.72

The **Lonaphala Sutta** also presents an account of the destruction of Karma. Herein the Buddha declares that if one holds the view that 'one experiences consequences in the same way one does an act', then leading a noble life would be futile for, there will be no opportunity to put an end to suffering. However, if one holds the view that just as one does a deed whose consequences would be experienced in a certain way, so would he experience its consequences, then leading a noble life would be meaningful and there will be an opportunity for the complete destruction of suffering.<sup>147</sup> This passage, which has not received much attention

of researchers, clearly brings out the Buddhist standpoint on Karma. As a result of neglecting this explanation or due to ignorance about it, many have levelled numerous unfounded criticisms against the Buddhist doctrine of Karma. Now how should we understand this teaching of the Buddha which nullifies all such baseless charges?

Prof. Lily de Silva<sup>148</sup> says that there are two senses in which karma, whose consequences are to be experienced (*vedaniya karma*) can be understood. She observes:

".....Here it is pointed out that only the effect of *vedaniya Karma* has to be experienced. This can be understood as only deeds which have made a deep impression on the mind produced results. Therefore the *Anantariya Kamma* such as killing of parents are very grievous deeds which mark a very deep, almost indelible, impression on the mind and they produce results of a very grave nature in the very next life. Other kammass of a less serious nature may produce effects at any time. It is also possible to understand the statement made by the Buddha in still a different way. We experience the results of kamma for which we make an opportunity to give effect..."

It should be noted that the man has the strength and the capability of preparing his present condition in such a way that it would not leave any room for consequences to take effect. The individual who is referred to as one who makes his living by consequences of his effort (*utthanaphalupajivi*) is such a one who shuts all avenues through which consequences of past Karma could come into operation. After analysing the Sutta Prof. Lily de Silva<sup>149</sup> concludes:

"All this evidence from the Pali Canon goes to show that the popular belief that we have to experience the fruits of all our past deeds is really a myth which has no foundation according to early Buddhism".

### 1.73

This Sutta employing a few graphic similes demonstrates the complex nature of the process in which the consequences of Karma

come into operation. It says when one drops a pinch of salt into a cup of water, the water in it becomes salty. This is because there is only a little water in the cup. But, if one were to drop the same amount of salt into the river Ganges its water will not become salty, for in proportion to salt the quantity of water in the river would be vast. Similarly, if an individual of developed personality, who has cultivated his body, virtue and wisdom were to do a trifling evil deed, whose consequences are to be experienced in this very life, even an iota of its consequences will not be seen in next life. This is because this person is of cultivated character. But if the same trifling deed were to be committed by an individual of opposite character, the consequences of that deed would lead him to hell. This is because he is of uncultured character. Ven. Gnanaponika Thero<sup>150</sup> raises some important points regarding this. The nature of consequence could undergo change due to various factors. Changes in the physical sphere namely, changes in time, destiny, Upadhi, payoga can influence the operation of consequences. It is possible that unknown to the individual concerned a past deed may come into operation. Similarly, the spiritual conditions may become subject to change. There is the possibility for an individual to develop a strong, morally strengthened character that would prevent consequences of deeds coming into operation, just as in the case of Angulimala. And above all this the individual has the free will, and this can influence the course of consequences. Taking all these possibilities into consideration Ven. Gnanaponika Thera<sup>151</sup> writes:

"This teaching of the modifiable nature of Kammic Reactions frees man from the bane of determinism and fatalism, its moral consequence. It keeps open for man the road to liberation...."

### 1.74

For numerous reasons it is necessary to get a clear understanding of the concept of good and bad (*puñña, papa or kusala, akusala*). This is specially important because this concept is of fundamental importance in the sphere of socio-economic activities. Moreover, scholars like Spiro have attempted to present

accumulation of merit (*puñña*) as a hindrance to liberation, and hence by implication, that all activities aimed at socio-economic progress as obstacles to the realization of the final goal. Therefore, it is very important to get a clear view about this concept. Dhammapada<sup>152</sup> has the following stanza.

"Not to do evil (*papa*), to cultivate good (*kusala*), to purify one's mind - this is the teaching of the Buddhas." Generally the opposite of *papa* is not *kusala*, but *puñña*. Here the Buddha uses the term *kusala* as the opposite of *papa*. Why is this? Is it because he intended to connote a special meaning?

#### 1.75

The Nikaya texts explain in varied ways why one should desist from doing evil (*papa*). The Dhammapada<sup>153</sup> says that the repeated commission of evil leads to accumulation of evil, that evil does go to hell,<sup>154</sup> and that one cannot find either in the sky or in the mid-ocean, or in a mountain cave or any where on earth a place to hide, so that one may escape the consequences of one's evil deeds.<sup>155</sup> A fool who does evil deeds thinks that it is sweet as honey and this ought to last only till consequences ripen, and then his happiness turns into grief.<sup>156</sup> Therefore, just as a merchant with a small escort and vast wealth avoids a dangerous route, just as one desiring to live avoids poison, even so should one shun evil deeds.<sup>157</sup> One should protect the mind from evil.<sup>158</sup> Thus, the Buddha in numerous ways has admonished the followers to abstain from evil.

#### 1.76

Has the Buddha admonished his followers to engage in doing good? Dr. M. M. J. Marasinghe<sup>159</sup> opines that the early Pali texts do not contain evidence to show that accumulation of merit was among the expectations of religious life of the disciples of the Buddha's time. However, the Dhammapada<sup>160</sup> says that a person who is engaged in doing good should do it again and again to find pleasure therein for, accumulation of merit causes happiness. The same text says that one's good deeds will await to receive the doer

of such good deeds when he goes from this world to the next, just as kinsmen, friends and well wishers await to receive a dear friend on his return.<sup>161</sup> The *Piya Sutta*<sup>162</sup> of the *Kosalasamyutta* also contains a lengthy admonition by the Buddha encouraging the performance of good deeds. In the *Mapunnabhaya Sutta*<sup>163</sup> the Buddha defines good (*puñña*) as happiness (*sukha*), and asks monks not to be frightened of merit. All these evidences show very clearly that accumulation of merit accords well with the Buddhist ideal. Hence, while not subscribing to Dr. Mahasinghe's view, one necessarily has to reject also Spiro's view that a true Buddhist should not accumulate merit.

#### 1.77

Yet one may query whether it is not contradictory for a religion that was preached to bring about the cessation of sansaric existence to offer advice to accumulate provisions for its continuity. One may question whether it is justifiable to hold that a religious teacher, who proclaimed that 'there is now no re-becoming', I do not praise even a trifle existence, even existence which is of short duration as snapping of fingers', did encourage performance of meritorious deeds that lead to continuous existence.

Is there a difference between the concepts of *puñña* and *kusala*? Ven. Prof. H. Gnanavasa<sup>164</sup> shows that there is a difference. Ven. Digalle Mahinda<sup>165</sup> also is of same view, and he points out that the word *kusala* connotes the idea of some special moral value which is absent in the word *puñña*. Dr. Gunapala Dharmasiri<sup>166</sup> observes;

"Though *akusala* and *papa* are translated as bad and *kusala* and *puñña* as good and are also often used as synonymous pairs in Buddhist texts, there are very important subtle differences to be noted among these concepts."

What becomes very clear from Nikaya references is that what *puñña* denotes is the kind of deed which produces happy consequences in this life, or specially in the next life. Such deeds are performed with expectation of desirable Sansaric consequences. The *Mahacattarisaka Sutta*<sup>167</sup> clearly shows that the mind of a

doer is not free from defilements, and that such a one desires happy consequences. Of the two levels of cultivation of the Noble Eightfold Path one is described as having defilements or influxes (*sasava*) sharing in merit (*puññabhagiya*) and maturing substratum of experiences (*upadhi vipaka*). It should be noted that the Buddha himself has defined *puñña* as *sukha*. Ven. Prof. Gnanavasa,<sup>168</sup> too, points out that merit is something accumulated by those who expect happy consequences.

### 1.78

From what has been stated so far it is seen that *kusala* unlike *puñña*, is not leading to continuity in *sansara*, but on the contrary lead to the opposite direction, to *Nirvana*, and though not desired by the doer, produces happy consequences while he continues to exist. The *Vijja Sutta*<sup>169</sup> of the *Anguttara nikaya* says that knowledge (*vijja*) is the forerunner of wholesome things. These are followed by moral shame and moral fear. *Puñña* has no power to lead one towards *Nirvana* but is capable of producing happy consequences in *sansara*. *kusala*, though also is capable of producing happy consequences in *sansara*, is a factor that is cultivated by those aiming to put an end to *sansaric* existence. Therefore, as pointed out also by Ven. Prof. Gnanavasa<sup>170</sup> *kusala* can be described as factors leading an individual from the level of mundane existence to the path of supra-mundane non-existence. This *kusala* which begins from morality (*sila*) leads the individual to concentration (*samadhi*) and wisdom (*pañña*).

### 1.79

When searching for reasons as to why Buddhism encourages accumulation of merit, attention is drawn to two factors. These are (i) Buddhism accepts the diversity that exists among individuals and that (2) it presents a graduated path to freedom. Both these factors are well emphasised in the *Nikayas*.

The *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*<sup>171</sup> through a very graphic simile, describes how the Buddha visualized about the beings in the world. Herein the Buddha compares the world to a lotus pond. In this

pond some lotuses remain without rising up from the water and being smeared by water, some remain at the surface level, there are yet others that rise above the water and remain without being smeared by water. So it is among the people. The people too are of different stages of development. Thus human society is made up of diverse characters. When considering the diversity of faculties of people, it is seen that some ignorant beings, though they associate with the wise throughout their lives, fail to understand the *Dhamma* just as the spoon never tastes the flavour of the soup.<sup>172</sup> On the contrary there are others who associate the wise only for a moment, but quickly grasp the *Dhamma*, just as the tongue tastes the flavour of the soup.<sup>173</sup> Buddhism accepts the differences of personalities, of attainment of fruits and also of faculties.<sup>174</sup> Thus, the *Samaññaphala Sutta*<sup>175</sup> records that the Buddha declared that King *Ajatasatta* would have attained the fruit of stream entrant had it not been for his patricidal act. In this manner some act, either of the past or present, may obstruct one's attainment of freedom. The story of *Angulimala* presents the opposite of this situation. Thus, the maturing of individuals, their ability to comprehend the truth and also their ability to attain emancipation differ. The time taken for destruction of craving differs from individual to individual. In some, craving is destroyed easily and intuition takes place quickly. In some others, it is the opposite. Therefore, when preaching to such a mixed audience it is not proper to concentrate on only those who are capable of developing intuition in this very life.<sup>176</sup> Preaching has to be done presenting a pragmatic, graduated course which helps to develop an individual's character in this life, finally leading to emancipation. The Buddha was not a religious teacher who preached a doctrine that was constrained by views, 'isms', principles, and pre-conceived notions. His approach to the truth was practical, based on the Buddhist conception of truth.

### 1.80

Here it should also be noted that according to Buddhism emancipation cannot be realized suddenly and in a moment. It is the culmination of a systematic, graduated path.<sup>177</sup> This fact is very

clearly explained in the **Kitagiri Sutta**.<sup>178</sup> Herein the Buddha says that he does not declare that the full realization of insight can be attained at the beginning itself. It is attainable through a process of gradual training, gradual action and gradual practice. The **Paharada Sutta** uses the simile of the ocean to explain the gradualness of the path leading to emancipation. The **Upanisa Sutta** is one of the many suttas where this graduated process is systematically explained. This Sutta adopts an explanation of the origin of 'dukkha' which is not generally found elsewhere. It points out how dukkha itself functions as the starting point in leading an individual gradually to emancipation.<sup>180</sup>

### 1.81

The gradual process of the development of confidence in the teacher and his teachings one opts to follow is described in the **Canki Sutta**.<sup>181</sup> It says that a person who approaches a teacher, first examines whether the teacher is truthful, whether he speaks of what he knows and sees whether he has in him craving, hatred and confusion, which prompts him to mislead his disciples. It is only when one gets convinced that the teacher is free of such evil tendencies and preaching a beneficial doctrine that he develops confidence in the teacher. The **Upanisa Sutta** describes the gradual process of the internal change that takes place in an individual till he realizes the final emancipation caused by his initial confidence that is kindled by dukkha. Suttas like **Canki** and **kitagiri** explain the gradual internal change that takes place from the time of arising of confidence up to the attainment of final release. These suttas show how an individual whose confidence is roused approaches a teacher, associates him, lends his ears to the teaching, remembers it, examines its meaning, understands it, then consents to practise it, puts forth effort, decides to exert and then realizes the final emancipation.<sup>182</sup> The gradual eradication of defilements is what takes place in real life. The **Dhammapada**<sup>183</sup> compares this to the process followed by a smith in removing the dross in silver. In the **Gihī Sutta** the Buddha addresses Ven. Sariputta in the presence of Anathapindika and says that the wise

gradually realize Nibbana.<sup>184</sup> This gradual sublimation caused by turning base desires into noble ones is accepted even in psychology. In the **Gavesi Sutta**<sup>185</sup> the Buddha explains to Venerable Ananda this process of sublimation of character.

### 1.82

The attainment of the stage of a stream-entrant (**sotapanna**) does not amount to the stopping of sansaric existence. There are some who after this attainment, are born seven times over before they realize Nibbana.<sup>186</sup> But a Sotapanna need not worry about accumulation of merit because as he has destroyed the three fetters, he is certainly destined for the realization of Nibbana.<sup>189</sup> If even a person who has entered the noble truth is subject to continuity of sansaric existence, then special attention should be paid to the state of existence of ordinary worldlings. This does not mean that there are not any who can accomplish all that have to be accomplished and attain final emancipation in this very life. The **Mangala Sutta**<sup>188</sup> refers to 'good deeds of the past' as blessings because such past merits contribute to the realization of Nibbana. One has to remember that Angulimāla though he was a murderer, was capable of realizing Nibbana in that life itself, and this was due to the merit he had accumulated in his past births.

Therefore, it is clear why Buddhism encourages accumulation of merit. This is not to prolong the process of sansaric existence, but to enable those who are incapable of realizing final emancipation in this very life to equip themselves with the necessary requisites. Merit is something connected with samsara, and it alone does not lead one to Nibbana. However, it is helpful for those aiming at the realization of Nibbana for, it enables them to be born in states in which they could perform wholesome deeds (**kusala**) and follow the path leading to Nibbana. This point has been clearly explained by Ven. Gnanavasa.<sup>189</sup>

### 1.83

What does merit or **puñña** connote? The **Puññābhisandha Sutta**<sup>190</sup> of the **Anguttaranikaya** says that taking refuge in the

Buddha Dhamma and the Sangha and the observance of five precepts are merit producing acts. In the **Vanaropa Sutta**<sup>191</sup> of the **Devatasamyutta** social service activities such as planting trees, making bridges, building houses etc. are described as acts leading to heaven. Thus it is seen that meritorious acts are motivating factors that help to produce enlightened, active individuals in the socio-economic sphere. Any one who studies the spread of Buddhism during the time of the Buddha as well as in the subsequent periods would not fail to see that this has been the role of merit in the history of mankind. Therefore, one can accept the position that there is no conflict between the practice leading to Nibbana and merit accumulating activities performed in this society.

#### 1.84

Criticism levelled by Spiro target this kind of activities for, he does not seem to be aware of any other higher kind of activities of the Buddhists. He has no idea of **kusala**. As shown above, **puñña** is not a hindrance to spiritual progress as envisaged by Spiro, and that, in the context of different levels of spiritual maturity of man this kind of meritorious activities are certainly of practical value for their final emancipation.

The above discussion makes the nature of **kusala** very clear. **kusala** does not contribute to arising of new karma, but leads to cessation of karma, and hence is not a hindrance for the realization of Nibbana. Many scholars have failed to understand this important fact. The Buddhists, from their ordinary level up to the time of their realization of emancipation, find opportunities for accomplishing **kusala** deeds. All social activities accomplished through friendliness, compassion and altruistic joy are such **kusala** deeds.

Yet a question arises as to whether an individual, while being a mere worldling and a mere trainee, is capable of performing **kusala** in the true sense of the word. It is seen that even in the case of a **Sotapanna** the three root causes of evil are not completely destroyed and, hence, there can be some defiling factors in his

actions. There are references in the Tripitaka to **Sotapannas**, who led household lives, maintaining wives and children and engaged in different kinds of professions. Two good examples of such **sotapanna** are Anathapindika, the millionaire businessman, and Bimbisara, the Great King of Magadha. In the **Migasala Sutta**<sup>192</sup> the Buddha explains not only how, Purana, who abstained from sexual intercourse which is regarded as a vulgar activity, but also how Isidatta, who led a life of unchastity attained not only the state of **Sotapanna** but also that of **Sakadagami**. It appears that it is possible for an individual to perform certain deeds without getting defiled by them, though those acts themselves are of a defiling nature. It may be that though these acts are naturally contaminated by some kind of defilements, these defiling elements could be suppressed by wholesome thoughts.

#### 1.85

From a discourse delivered by the Buddha to the householders of **Saleyyaka** it is clear that **kusala** is endowed with the power of bringing happiness in sansaric existence as well as of destroying defilements and leading to emancipation. This Sutta while explaining that unrighteous conduct and misbehaviour (**adhammacariya**, **visamacariya**) cause decline, and their opposites being about happy destinies also points out that, if desired, wholesome activities are capable of leading one to the destruction of defilements in this very life.<sup>193</sup> Thus it is clear that **puñña** is the storehouse of all activities done desiring good results leading to continued existence. **kusala**, on the other hand, is an activity capable of causing sansaric happiness and clearing the path to emancipation.

Now we can arrive at the following conclusion. The Buddha encourages his disciples both monk and lay to achieve both mundane and supra-mundane progress, and that this encouragement is in no way coming into conflict with his teaching. **puñña** and **kusala** are two motivating factors that regulate and direct the lives of sansaric beings in their pursuit of Nibbana. While former is worldly, the latter is above worldly. Therefore,

the Buddha's teaching is capable of raising both social and economic activities to a very high level.

#### 1.86

At this point it is not necessary to indulge in a detailed examination regarding the justifiability of leading an enlightened individual to engage in social activities. Prof. K. N. Jayatilleke's reply to Prof. Toynbee provides an adequate answer to this.<sup>194</sup> The **Lohicca Sutta**<sup>195</sup> contains the Buddha's reply to a similar question posed by a Brahmin. The Buddha's admonition to the first sixty Arahants requesting them to go on tour, disseminating the Dhamma, also shows how justifiable it is to encourage the enlightened people to engage in socially beneficial activities.

#### 1.87

The **Lohicca Sutta** makes one understand that engagement in socially beneficial activities and display of compassion are characteristics of an emancipated person. As Arahants are those who have completely destroyed craving (**lobha**) one cannot speak of craving with regard to their activities. There is no selfish expectation in acts done through non-craving. It is also not a mere discharge of one's obligations for an Arahant is one who has accomplished all that should be accomplished (**katahicca**). So acts of an enlightened person surpass both these stages. Hence Prof. Gunapala Dharmasiri<sup>196</sup> explains:

"Can one say that a realized person's actions are deontological? They are not even deontological because the saint goes beyond the sphere of deontology. A Buddha need not and does not practise charity. Charity is his very nature. His acts can be characterized only as spontaneous happenings. It is here we see how Buddhist ethics transcends the dichotomy between teleology and deontology."

Prof. Jayatilleke points out that it is a basic misconception of the Arahantship that has led some to conclude that qualities such as friendliness and compassion are totally destroyed in Arahants. In Suttas such as **Samanamandika**<sup>198</sup> the Arahant is described as

one endowed with kusala (**sampanña kusala**) and also one who has ten perfect characteristics.

There are eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path and two additional qualities namely, perfect knowledge (**samma ñāṇa**) and perfect emancipation (**samma vimutti**) which are listed when the path is enumerated as having ten factors. As pointed out by Prof. Jayatilleke<sup>199</sup> the thought of non-violence (**avihinsa sankappa**) is included in right thought (**samma sankappa**) of one who has completed his training.

#### 1.88

Both in the life of the Buddha and the lives of Arahants this compassion for others is well demonstrated. This is embodied in the Buddha's advice to the first sixty Arahants<sup>200</sup>

Thus it is clear from the Nikaya literature that an individual led by Buddhist attitudes and outlooks fully participate in social activities at three different levels. Through meritorious deeds (**puñña**) he participates in the ordinary level of sansaric existence. Those who strive for emancipation do so, through wholesome deeds (**kusala**) and, activities in their capacity as those endowed with kusala' (**sampanna kusala**).

### V. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND MEDITATION

#### 1.89

The seventh factor in the Noble Eightfold Path is Right Mindfulness (**Samma Sati**). As seen from the **Saccavibhanga Sutta** **Samma sati** is the foundation of mindfulness (**satipatthana**). The **Mahasatipatthana Sutta** says that the four foundations of mindfulness is the only way to purity or emancipation. **Satipatthana** is meditation, and this has to be practised individually. After accepting the position that one is responsible for one's own purity, a Buddhist has to engage in meditation. All these facts have been subjected to criticism by sociologists. Some

even go to the extent of saying that there cannot be any kind of responsibility for the Buddhist with regard to social activities and that meditation is really a - social. Does such a view find support from the Nikayas? If it finds support, then we have to admit that we have no right to talk about a Buddhist economic philosophy.

#### 1.90

This sort of criticisms are found in the two books of Max Weber namely, **Sociology of Religion** and **Religions of India**. Melford Spiro and Heinz Bechert also support Weber. Ven. Prof. Walpola Rahula, Ven. Nyanaponika, Dr. Douglas Burns, Prof. Padmasiri de Silva and many others oppose Weber's and his supporter's view. Prof. Padamasiri de Silva<sup>201</sup> cites the following statement of Weber which Spiro approvingly quotes in his **Buddhism and Society**.

"Characterization of the influence upon external behaviour of Buddhistic type of salvation is not sought through proving one's self by any inner-worldly or ultra-worldly actions or by 'work' of any kind, but, in contrast to this it is sought in a psychic state remote from activity. This is decisive for the location of arahat ideal with respect to the "world" of rational action. No bridge connects them, nor is there any bridge to any activity conceptualised "social conduct." Weber<sup>202</sup> adds further:

"These subjective and mystical beliefs may result in absolute flight from the world. Such a contemplative flight from the world, is characteristic of ancient Buddhism. " A further observation by Weber<sup>203</sup> is:

"All rational purposive activity is regarded as leading away from salvation, except of course the subjective activity of concentrated contemplation, which empties the soul of the passion for life and every connection with worldly interests."

The following excerpt from Weber's Religion of India<sup>204</sup> is a scathing criticism levelled against Buddhism.

"Salvation is an absolutely personal performance of the self reliant individual. No one and particularly no social community

can help him. The specific a - social character of all genuine mysticism is here carried to its maximum"

This is Weberian thought and does this apply to Buddhist meditation?

#### 1.91

Before summarizing the criticism levelled against Buddhism it is appropriate to cite the following observation of Ven. Prof. Rahula.<sup>205</sup>

"The Buddha's teaching, particularly his way of 'meditation', aims at producing a state of perfect mental health, equilibrium and tranquility. It is unfortunate that hardly any other section of the Buddha's teaching is so much misunderstood as 'meditation' both by Buddhists and non-Buddhists. The moment the word 'meditation' is mentioned, one thinks of an escape from the daily activities of life; assuming a particular posture, like a statue in some cave or cell in a monastery, in some remote place cut off from society, and musing on, or being absorbed in, some kind of mystic or mysterious thought or trance. True Buddhist meditation does not mean this kind of escape at all."

Criticism levelled against meditation in general and the Buddhist path to emancipation in particular can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Meditation is escape from society, a practice carried out in solitude, away from all day to day social activities.
- (2) It is to be seated in a particular posture absorbed in some kind of mysterious thought or trance.
- (3) It is a personal, a selfish activity.
- (4) The path to emancipation too is also a personal path of the selfish ones, who do not seek the help of others or society.
- (5) This meditation which is devoid of any kind of activity is totally futile with regard to social activities.

According to these criticisms one who is engaged either in meditation or path to emancipation is an insignificant person in the

sphere of socio-economic activities. He does not contribute in any way to any kind of developmental activity. Besides, he is a burden a parasite on such activity.

### 1.92

In the **Mahasatipatthana Sutta**<sup>206</sup> the Buddha shows that the paths to emancipation and meditation are identical, for he calls the cultivation of the four foundations of mindfulness the only way to the cessation of suffering, to purity, to the Noble Eightfold Path, to the realization of Nibbana.

Cultivation of four foundations of mindfulness mean contemplation on the body, feeling, mind and mind-objects.<sup>207</sup> What is important in this context is not to go into details about meditation, but to find out whether there is any relation between meditation and day to day activities of life, and whether the criticism that it is an escape from life is justifiable.

In brief, contemplation on the body consists of mindfulness with regard to all activities connected with the body; when one departs or returns, whether one looks at or looks away from, whether one has drawn in or stretched out his limbs, whether one has donned under-robe, over robe or bowl, whether one is eating, drinking, chewing, reposing, or whether he is obeying the calls of nature - is aware of what it is about. In going, standing, sitting, sleeping, watching, talking, or keeping silence, he knows what he is doing.

### 1.93

Similarly, he adopts himself with regard to feeling. This means that he will know that feelings are threefold as pleasant, unpleasant and neutral, that they arise based on pleasure and so on. He will experience these feelings with full awareness and mindfulness of their form and source of origin.<sup>208</sup> The perfect understanding of thoughts, their source of origin etc. constitute the contemplation on the mind. This has been explained in sixteen ways.<sup>209</sup> The contemplation on mind objects pertains to the close awareness of the arising of all types of mental thoughts as well as thoughts that form hindrances to one's mind culture.<sup>210</sup>

### 1.94

From this it is clear that mindfulness means to be ardent, alert and conscious of all bodily postures and movements, of all mental and bodily actions at the moment they are taking place. Its continuous practice is its cultivation or **bhavana** which is generally rendered into English as 'meditation'. In this mind cultivation process leading to a state where no bodily or mental action would take place without the mind being aware of it, mind gets concentrated with the eradication of defilements. The meditator attains purity. The realization of emancipation is its fruit.

In this meditation nothing outside the activities of day to day life was taken as its object. There is no escape whatsoever from normal human activities. There is neither absorption in any mysterious thought nor is there any expectation of spiritual unification with the God. It is also seen that there is no isolation or any rejection of the society. There is also no particular posture for this meditation.

As shown by Ven. Nyanaponika<sup>211</sup> the field of Satipatthana meditation is daily life. There is no need either to go away from the society or to follow the life of an ascetic. What is necessary is to use various situations in life as they are, in the present moment. Ven. Prof. Walpola Rahula<sup>212</sup> expresses the same idea in different words.

"The ways of 'meditation' given in this discourse are not cut off from life, nor do they avoid life, on the contrary they are all connected with our life, our daily activities, our sorrows and joys, our words and thoughts, our moral and intellectual occupations".

He makes the following remarks as the meditation on mindfulness of in and out breathing (**anapanasati**).<sup>213</sup>

"It is for this 'meditation' only, that a particular and a definite posture is prescribed in the text. The other forms of 'meditation' given in this sutta, you may sit, stand, walk or lie down, as you like".

Referring to postures and other bodily acts Ven. Prof. Rahula says:<sup>214</sup>

"Another very important, practical and useful form of meditation (mental development) is to be aware and mindful of what ever you do, physically or verbally during the daily routine of your life, private, public or professional. Whether you walk, stand, sit, lie down or sleep whether you stretch or bend your limbs, whether you look around, whether you put on your clothes, whether you talk or keep silent, whether you eat or drink, even whether you answer the calls of nature - in these and other activities, you should be fully aware and mindful of the act you perform at the moment. That is to say, that you should live in the present moment, in the present action".

Though some may argue that to practise meditation one should have a mind directed within, the meditation on mind-objects (**dhammanupassana**) can be examined from a different angle. The explanation presented by Ven. Prof. Walpola Rahula<sup>215</sup> would suffice to clear this point.

"There is a form of 'meditation' on ethical, spiritual and intellectual subjects. All our studies, reading and discussions, conversations and deliberations on such subjects are included in this 'meditation'. To read this book and to think deeply about the subjects discussed in it, is a form of meditation. We have seen earlier that the conversation between Khemaka and the group of monks was a form of meditation which led the realization of Nibbana".

#### 1.95

Prof. Padmasiri de Silva<sup>216</sup> opines that the criticism that there is a dichotomy between meditation and practical life is a major one, for according to him "it is related to the efficiency of a certain technique necessary for the successful attainment of enlightenment. After understanding that meditation is not an escape from life, it is necessary to consider whether meditation produces an inactive individual or whether it leads to the development of a personality

devoid of action. Along with this the criticism that emancipation is a totally personal accomplishment of the individual who is bent on his own welfare, too should be discussed.

According to Prof. Padmasiri de Silva<sup>217</sup> meditation does not lead to inaction, but it is an exercise that drives away laziness, brings about continuous alertness and awareness and trains one's senses to develop a keen sensitiveness. Generally an individual does not live in the present. He is either lingering in the past or clinging to the future, dreaming and building castles in the air. Satipatthana is an exercise meant to train oneself to focus one's attention to the present, to present activities. This enables him to perform all his actions with diligence and total awareness, avoid lapses and pitfalls and consequently unpleasant experiences leading to unhappiness, regret and misery.

Therefore, it is very clear that awareness or mindfulness is a useful quality to be cultivated. Being mindful means, not to be forgetful. This will prevent neglect of duty, help develop a sense of responsibility and punctuality, and will help also to focus one's undivided attention on one's undertakings. Thus mindfulness will reveal means through which one could accomplish an undertaking successfully and perform all work systematically. Hence it is seen that meditation will produce a very active, dynamic individual to the society.

#### 1.96

Undoubtedly, meditation is a means through which one could accomplish one's own welfare. This is also the result one obtains by following the Noble Eightfold Path. It is a fact that Buddhism teaches that one should strive for one's well being, and that neither an outsider nor an external agent nor even an outside group could cause one's well being. Then how does one who strives for his own well being 'becomes a person concerned about the well being of others? Can anyone say that such a personal striving will bring about general social well being? Will an individual who is concerned about personal well being be capable of doing any good in the economic sphere?

To find answers to these questions it is necessary to examine the dichotomy or more precisely the mutual relation between one's well being and well being of others. This should be done by analysing the teachings embodied in early texts, without depending on views presented by critics who have failed to get at the true impact of these teachings. The following stanza occurring in the Dhammapada<sup>218</sup> gives the order of priority between one's well being and well being of others, and also explains why it is so.

"Attanam eva pathamam patirupe nivesaye  
Athaññāmanusaseyya na kilesseyya pandito"

Let one first establish oneself in what is proper, and then instruct others. Such a wise man will not be defiled.

This means that one should first cultivate within oneself those qualities that one deems good before advising others to cultivate them. Otherwise advice would not be complied with and besides, the adviser himself would be found fault with. If this is not done, one would become a hypocrite, whose deeds are poles apart from his words. Such behaviour would bring an individual into disrepute and decline.

This sort of foundation is necessary for the successful accomplishment of service for others' well being. This is clearly explained by the Buddha in the **Sallekha Sutta**<sup>219</sup> through the graphic use of an apt simile. The Buddha explains that one who himself is thoroughly bogged down in mud cannot help another who is in a similar condition. To help the other one should himself first get out of the mud. This is why a person who is desirous of doing social service should first strengthen his own personality. The idea behind the Buddhist teaching of "first establishing oneself in what is proper has nothing to do with selfishness; it only brings into focus a necessary pre-requisite for successful accomplishment of social service.

#### 1.97

Some may ask why did the Buddha admonish his monk disciples to resort to solitary places, the foot of trees to meditate,

when meditation could be done while living in the society.<sup>220</sup> The answer to this question is found when one examines the objective of monkhood. It is well known that Ven. Devadatta proposed five strict practices for the approval of the Buddha. There are also references in early Buddhist literature to thirteen kinds of ascetic practices (dhutanga). The Buddha did neither give approval to Ven. Devadatta's proposals nor did he make the ascetic practices compulsory. These are practices that alienate an individual from the society. This also clarifies the Buddha's intention in admonishing monks to resort to solitary places for meditation. He did not intend making an individual an empty, useless person, only bent on his own well being through out his life.

#### 1.98

As the Buddha's teaching on this point has often been misrepresented, it is relevant, in this context, to examine another important Sutta, the **Sedaka Sutta**.<sup>221</sup> Herein is explained what the proper relation should be between serving for one's well being and well being of others. For this the Buddha uses a dialogue between an acrobat and his assistant. The assistant is performing acrobatics on the top of a bamboo pole held aloft by the master standing on the ground. While the performance is going on the master tells the assistant. "protect me well, then you, too, would be protected". The assistant replies "No, Sir, you protect yourself. I shall look after myself. Then both of us would be well protected". The Buddha approves the assistant's reply. The crux of the whole matter is that, when one protects oneself he protects the others, too, and that by protecting others one too becomes protected.<sup>222</sup>

#### 1.99

Ven. Nyanaponika Thero in his book entitled **Protection through Satipatthana**<sup>223</sup> explains how one who protects himself protects others. According to him this happens at three levels namely, material level, ethical level and meditational level. For example, if a patient suffering from a contagious disease, happens to take care of himself, the disease will ease out, and consequently the

problems faced by those around him would also be minimized, for they would not get contaminated by the disease. This concern for others is a laudable tradition seen among the Sri Lankans, even at present. It is often heard people saying "I am very careful, not because I am very much concerned about myself, but I am very concerned about the children". This sentiment clearly expresses their altruism. The poor worker takes care not even to catch a cold out of concern for their young ones, for they know that if they fall ill, the children would have to starve. This explains the material level at which the practice of protecting oneself works for the welfare of others.

The second level is the ethical level. Craving, hatred and confusion are roots of evil, producing evil acts harmful to oneself and others, and hence, getting rid of these is beneficial to all. One could imagine the evil consequences, personal as well as social, that take place as a result of breaking the third precept - that is indulging in sexual misbehaviour. Similarly when this precept is observed, much good happens to the individual as well as to the society. The third level is extremely important. It is the mind that controls and leads the whole world. Therefore, a person who is mindful can perform immense good to oneself and others. History records numerous instances related to various fields, where individuals with cultured and nurtured minds have contributed immensely for the well being, happiness and freedom of their suffering fellow beings.

Ven. Nyanaponika<sup>224</sup> commenting on the importance of meditation as explained in the **Sedeka Sutta** says:

"Therefore our Sutta speaks here of bhavana, the meditative development of the mind in its widest sense. This is the highest form of protection which our world can bestow. He who has developed his mind by meditation lives in peace with himself and the world. From him no harm or violence will issue. The peace and purity which he radiates will have an inspiring, uplifting power and will be a blessing to the world. He will be a positive factor in society, even if he lives in seclusion and silence. When

understanding and recognition of the social value of meditative life ceases in a nation, it will be one of the first symptoms of spiritual deterioration".

#### 1.100

From the Buddhist point of view one who is not concerned about oneself cannot be concerned about others. This is because qualities that are required to work for one's own well being blossom only from acts aimed at serving for the well being of others. The lotus of the individual blossoms out in the pond of human society. In the words of Prof. W. S. Karunaratna:<sup>225</sup>

"The selfishness of the individual can be progressively eliminated by sublimating all self-centred emotions in the service of fellowmen. Positive qualities like liberality, kindness, compassion, and charity can be cultivated only in the midst of society".

Prof. Gunapala Dharmasiri<sup>226</sup> explaining the close relation between these two attitudes says:

"The dichotomy between egoism and altruism breaks down again when he (i.e. the Buddha) repeatedly emphasises the necessity of other regarding virtues for one's development as a person not only on a social level, but even on the spiritual level where progress is impossible without cultivating other regarding virtues."

#### 1.101

The **Mahacattarisaka Sutta**<sup>227</sup> refers to three factors that are related to Right livelihood (**Samma ajiva**). These are Right view, Right effort and Right mindfulness. Now this last mentioned factor is the foundation of mindfulness. This shows that Buddhist meditation is closely related to the Buddhist socio-economic philosophy, Buddhist meditation is two-fold namely '**Samatha**' and '**Vipassana**.' A mind cultivated through either of these processes becomes extremely necessary and useful when engaging in socio-economic activities and this is specially so in the present time.

A western doctor who makes a comparison between Buddhist meditation and psychology says:

"Through Science, technology and social organization western man has built a civilization of unprecedented wealth and grandeur. Yet, despite this mastery of his environment, he has given little thought to mastery of himself. In fact his newly acquired wealth and leisure has heightened his sensuality and weakened his self-discipline. It becomes increasingly apparent, however, that a stable and a prosperous democracy can endure only so long as we have intelligent, self-disciplined, and properly motivated citizens. Legislation and education alone will not ensure this. Buddhism presents a technique by which this can be obtained, but the responsibility rests with each individual. No one can cure our neurosis and strengthen our characters except ourselves.<sup>228</sup>

#### 1.102

One may tread along the correct economic path with thorough understanding; yet if he is not constantly mindful, there is the risk of going stray. This risk is obvious in the present day consumer oriented societies. Philosophers<sup>229</sup> have shown how the consumer has fallen into 'self alienation'. This happens because they are enslaved and infatuated with consumption.

The fact of consumer societies being controlled and led by advertisements itself reveals the existence of an uncultured mental state. The consumer is unaware as to what he should buy for, he does not leisurely ponder over it. He just accepts new-needs created by the trader. This is how a handful of people controls a mass population. The consumer caught in the grip of advertisements and trade tricks turns into a mere puppet that dance according to the manipulations of the trader.<sup>230</sup>

The environmentalists have shown that people, indiscriminately employing modern technology destroy natural resources, sometimes making them completely disappeared from the face of the earth; pollute the environment making it almost impossible to live; and continue to engage in over consumption. This, as the

environmentalists explain, is a mad journey. Every problem that is related to the present day economic system clearly establishes the contemporary relevance of the Buddhist teaching which says that right livelihood should be guided and directed by right mindfulness.

## VI. THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### 1.103

Well known are the numerous views put forward by many scholars to show that the Buddhist path to emancipation ie. the Noble Eightfold Path, is not a programme of action that is capable of bringing about a practicable socio-economic discipline. Some consider that this path is not for the laity but solely for monks. Some others hold this path to be leading to a sort of private emancipation, ignoring common social good.<sup>231</sup> Still others are of the view that this path has to be accomplished by an individual with an introspective mind through meditation in solitude. Whatever may be the intentions of these critics, if any of these criticism could be established with supportive evidence from early texts, then it has to be granted that Buddhist teachings are not by any means capable of influencing the process of socio-economic development, and hence, it is futile to attempt to find guidance from such a teaching for any kind of constructive social reformation.

#### 1.104

The Buddha in his inaugural discourse the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*<sup>232</sup> presents the Noble Eightfold Path which is described as the Noble Truth of the 'practice leading to the cessation of the suffering'. This path consists of following eight factors. i. Right View ii. Right Thought iii. Right Speech. iv. Right Action v. Right Livelihood vi. Right Effort vii. Right Mindfulness and viii. Right Concentration. In the *Culavedalla Sutta*<sup>233</sup> Bhikkhuni Dhammadinna explains to Visakha, that the Noble Eightfold Path is included in the threefold training - namely,

morality (**sila**) concentration (**samadhi**) and wisdom (**pañña**) The factors Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are included in morality; Right Effort, Right mindfulness and Right concentration in concentration and Right View and Right Thought in 'wisdom'. It is seen that Ven. Sariputta also analyses the path in the **Saccavibhanga Sutta**.<sup>134</sup> Therein it is said that Right Speech is abstention from lying, harsh speech, slandering and idle talk; Right Action is abstention from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct and Right Livelihood is avoidance of an unrighteous livelihood. Right Effort is the exertion made to cultivate wholesome things so far not cultivated and to nurture further what has already been cultivated. Right Mindfulness is to ponder over the Four Foundations of Mindfulness i.e. the body, feeling, mind and mind-objects and to live with awareness and alertness, exerting to burn out all defilements, ill will and grief. Right Concentration is the attainment of the four Dyanas. Right View is the understanding of the Four Noble Truths, and Right Thought is the cultivation of thoughts of renunciation, non-violence and friendliness.

#### 1.105

As explained by the Buddha himself in the **Nagara Sutta**<sup>235</sup> he obtained this understanding while he was yet a Bodhisattva. He, understanding that the world is established in suffering,\* further pondered over as to how suffering is caused. Then he knew that it is dependently arising, and that with the gradual cessation of causes and conditions that cause suffering, suffering itself will cease to be. To describe this practice leading to the cessation of suffering he used a simile. A certain man wandering in the forest sees an ancient path used by the people of old. Treading along that path this man sees an ancient city with beautiful gardens, parks, ponds, mores and a wall. Later he informs about his discovery to the King or to a Minister. Then that King or Minister going along that path sees for himself the real situation and builds a city there. Subsequently this city becomes prosperous, populated and famous. Monks, I, too saw the Ancient Path (**puranam maggam**), the Ancient Highway.<sup>236</sup> Thus Ancient Path is the Noble Eightfold Path

which the Buddha tread and subsequently declared to all. The Buddha further says that this noble life is the complete life that should be known by all and that which has been fully made known by the wise.<sup>237</sup>

#### 1.106

The **Mahacattarisaka Sutta**<sup>238</sup> is of special significance among the Suttas dealing with the Noble Eightfold Path. Therein the Path is explained as consisting of conditions and accessories. The description of the five factors namely, Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood as being two fold is a special feature. Right View, Right Effort and Right Mindfulness are said to operate in unison with each of these factors. The one pointedness of the mind attained by the collective development of the other seven factors is said to be the concentration endowed with conditions and accessories. The trainees are endowed with eight factors; and the Arahants with these eight factors and two other additional factors namely, Right Knowledge (**samma ñana**) and Right Emancipation (**samma vimutti**), thus making a total of ten factors. The explanation of the gradual manner in which each preceding factor beginning with Right View, leads to the succeeding one is also noteworthy. It also describes the two-fold nature of the path one having defilements, sharing merit and maturing substratum of experience and the other devoid of defilements and supramundane.

#### 1.107

The **Nagara Sutta** presents the process of understanding the prevalence of **dukkha** upto the realization of the goal as a gradual personal experience the Buddha had since the time he was a Bodhisattva. This path, which was acknowledged even by the former Buddhas, is not a creation of the Buddha, but a mere discovery of his. It is a path that would be endorsed by any intelligent person, and a path that could be followed by others. The **Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta**<sup>239</sup> says that this is a path that should be seen, understood and cultivated. Understanding alone

will not suffice; each individual has to tread upon it by himself. It's not a divine creation nor a divine revelation, nor a gift from an external power nor even an object of faith. It is a path that should be and could be discovered by human intelligence, a path to be followed with self-reliance and with self-confidence. Even the Buddhas are mere guides; emancipation is one's own responsibility and those who firmly resolve and strive diligently will be successful in realizing the goal. The path discards all kinds of prayer, invocations and rituals etc. that are common in other religions. What is essential is individual striving. This is not a practice to be followed on particular days, at particular places, or at particular occasions. This is a scheme of action pervading through all activities, bringing about a change in outlook and attitude. Through this path it is expected to bring about a total development of personality that transgresses all fields connoted by such terms as religion, philosophy, ethics, science etc. Philosophy is the preceding factor in this path. Yet it is not limited to philosophy. A system of ethics is not limited to any particular theory. It prepares a way of life to be followed. Each one has to follow it individually, and this is to be done not in solitude, but in the socio-economic field.

#### 1.108

Scholars such as Max Weber<sup>240</sup> opines:

"It will be recalled that the central and almost sole lay virtue among Buddhists was originally veneration of the monks, who alone belonged to the religious community, and whom it was incumbent upon the laity to support with alms".

According to this the Noble Eightfold Path is solely for monks, and the lay cannot follow it. Therefore it is appropriate here to consider the relation of the Noble Eightfold Path to the laity. Martin Wickremasinghe,<sup>241</sup> the well known Sri Lankan scholar who analyses a statement of Anatole France, says this confused statement is due to his mixing up of the lay life and the Noble Eightfold Path meant for those who have renounced household life. Another writer commenting on Wickremasinghe's observation says,

that though it is true that the Buddha declared only one path, this path is meant for both monks and laity.<sup>242</sup> These two contradicting statements could confuse the readers and perhaps make them less enthusiastic about socio-economic activities or even induce them to escape from all worldly activities. We have to find out whether early Buddhism, as found in the Nikayas, leave the people in such a state of confusion or is a sphere outside religion.

#### 1.109

Regarding the Noble Eightfold Path the suttas say that it is the best path<sup>243</sup> and the only path for the purity of vision.<sup>244</sup> The **Mahaparinibbana Sutta** records that the Buddha just before his demise, addressing Subhadda, said that in whatsoever dispensation the Noble Eightfold Path is not found in it there will not be a true monk of the first, second, third or fourth stage, and that in his own dispensation are found the Noble Eightfold Path and consequently also the monks of the four stages. The Buddha describes also the systems of other teachers as being void of true saints for these systems lack the Noble Eightfold Path.<sup>245</sup> The **Paharada Sutta**<sup>246</sup> says that just as the ocean is of one taste namely, taste of salt, just so is the dispensation of the Buddha which is of one taste namely taste of emancipation. As explained in the **Nagara Sutta**<sup>247</sup> this only path, the path with one and only goal, was not exclusively preached for monks, but for monks, nuns as well as, male and female lay disciples. This itself is sufficient to reject the view that the path is meant exclusively for monks. Two Suttas one in the **Anguttara nikaya** and another in the **Majjima nikaya** say just as monks, even the lay can accomplish the path to Nibbana.<sup>248</sup>

#### 1.110

Naturally, a question arises as to how a pleasure enjoying layman who is married and with family and engaged in activities connected with production of goods and a monk who has renounced household life, its pleasures as well as encumbrances and all activities connected with production of goods follow this same path having a single goal. Prof. Kalupahana<sup>249</sup> analysing this problem arrives at the following conclusion.

"This moral path is explained as being eightfold (*atthangika*). It is recommended for both householders and those who have renounced home and family life".

As pointed out before the *Mahacattarisaka Sutta*<sup>250</sup> presents two levels at which the path could be followed, thus dispelling all confusion and misunderstanding on this issue. One level of practice is with defilements (*sasava*) partaking merit (*puññabhagiya*) and producing rebirth (*upadhi vipaka*). The other is noble (*ariya*) without defilements (*anasava*) and supramundane (*lokuttara*). This two-fold practice is applied to the first five factors of the path. In the present context, an analysis about how this two fold mode is applied to the fifth factor that is Right Livelihood is of special importance. The explanation in the *Sutta* is as follows:

Right Livelihood is preceded by Right View. How is that? It is through distinguishing wrong livelihood as wrong livelihood and right livelihood as right livelihood. What is wrong livelihood? It is to seek livelihood by deceit, pater, prognostication and pursuing gain with gain: What is meant by that form of right livelihood which is accompanying defilements, partaking merit and producing rebirth? This is abstention from what is described as wrong livelihood, and the practise of right livelihood. The noble, defilement - true supra - mundane right livelihood is abstention from wrong livelihood and practising right livelihood with a defilement - free mind, at a supra - mundane level. Here the effort one puts forth to give up wrong livelihood and pursue right livelihood is called Right Mindfulness. Thus Right View which is the preceding factor and Right Effort as well as Right Mindfulness fall into Right Livelihood.<sup>251</sup>

The three qualifying terms *sasava puññabhagiya* and *upadhi vipaka* are important. The term *sasava* connotes that at this level of practise the path is not free from defilements. *Puññabhagiya* connotes that it tends to produce merit and *upadhi vipaka* means that it contributes to mature sansaric consequences such as rebirth in good destinies. Though what is meant by these terms may in general be applicable even to the life of a monk, in this context

these terms are used more in relation to the life of laity who are bent on enjoying sensual pleasures. This is more so, because the *bhikkhus* are those who have embarked on a life that aims at quick destruction of defilements and realizing the ultimate goal i.e. Nibbana. When analysing the karma concept (vide I, iv) it was shown how karma becomes important in the sansaric context. Herein it is shown how pleasure enjoying laity too could, while performing meritorious deeds, cultivate the Noble Path. In other words, what is meant here is that an individual while cultivating the Noble Path and actively participating in socio-economic activities, could also lead a life of a true male or female lay disciple.

### 1.111

The *Dhammachakkappavattana Sutta*<sup>252</sup> discards the practice involving indulgence in sensual pleasures (*Kamasukhallikanuyoga*) as being low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble and conducive to harm. Similarly it discards the practice of self-mortification (*Attakilamathanuyoga*) as being suffering, ignoble, and conducive to harm. After discarding these two extreme paths it presents the Noble Eightfold Path as the Middle Path (*Majjhima Patipada*). Ignobleness and harmfulness are two factors that are common to these two extreme practices. And two characteristics that distinguish the Noble Eightfold Path from these two extremes are its nobleness and its quality of causing well being, or in other words, its fruitfulness. Prof. Kalupahana<sup>253</sup> points out that,

"The fruitfulness" needs to be understood in the light of the different groups of people who undertake to follow the Noble Eightfold Path. As pointed out earlier it is a path to be followed both by the householders and those who renounce the household life. The eightfold path when adopted by the householders (*gahattha*) is envisaged to bear fruit (*attha*). The *Therigatha*, often speaks of human beings (*manava*) who till the land with ploughs, sow seeds and feed their wives and children and enjoy wealth (*dhana*). Of course, there is nothing unfair about such

activities, so long as one is not driven by extensive greed. This is a form of Right Effort (**samma vayama**) of Right Action (**samma kammanta**) and of right Livelihood (**Samma ajiva**). The wealth one enjoys, in this case is the fruit (**attha**) of one's effort, achieved through "fair" or just means".

It has already been shown that according to the **Saccavibhanga Sutta** Right View is the understanding of the Four Noble Truths (vide 1,104). The **Mahacattarisaka Sutta** also says that the clear understanding of the distinction between wrong livelihood and right livelihood is one's right view.<sup>254</sup> It is clear that according to both these Suttas the twofold analysis of the path has to be understood in relation to the occasion and the individual (or groups of individuals) concerned. This is because 'fruitfulness' in relation to monks differ when compared in relation to laity. This interpretation is further strengthened by such suttas as **Dvicakkhu** and **Vaddhi**.

#### 1.112

The above discussion paves the way for a number of conclusions regarding the influence of the Noble Eightfold Path on worldly well being, material progress, and socio-economic development. One of main conclusions that could be made is that an individual's social development or economic progress is not dependent on God or on the grace of some external power; that the expected goal could be realized without resorting to prayers, rituals etc.. One has to reach the goal by making the journey himself, through firm resolve and through effort after seeing the true nature of things. It could also be concluded that as the Buddhist path to emancipation is a fruitful path equally open to both the pleasure enjoying house holders as well as to monks who have renounced household pleasures and all related activities, an individual is able to actively engage in socio-economic activities while following this path.

The **Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta** refers to the Noble Eightfold Path as the Middle Path (**majjima patipada**) because it

abandons the two extreme paths. This avoidance of the extremes is a characteristic of all eight factors of the path. Just as a middle doctrine (i.e; the Dependent origination) is followed in the sphere of philosophy rejecting Annihilationism and Eternalism, in the sphere of ethics too this Middle Path is followed. Right Livelihood, which is included in morality (**sila**) develops on this basis. The admonition to follow the Middle Path is applicable with regard to the enjoyment of material wealth too.<sup>255</sup> This Middle Path provides a philosophy to the present consumer oriented society which is engaged in limitless destruction of resources as well as unlimited consumption, to set aright its misguided economic system. In fact, this Middle Path presents the most needed philosophy to solve the numerous problems that arise when reorganizing the economic system which has brought into existence millions and millions of people who are submerged in dire poverty, and also a relatively small population who while reaping the maximum benefits of technology, have got bewildered through prosperity.

#### 1.113

The Noble Eightfold Path is only a means and not the goal. The **Mahacattarisaka Sutta**<sup>256</sup> explains how each preceding factor becomes the cause of the succeeding one. Right Concentration is the one-pointedness of the mind accompanied by the other seven factors. This path does not really end here for, it is seen that the trainees mind, which gets concentrated by the successful accomplishment of the eight factors, becomes the cause for Right Knowledge (**samma ñaṇa**) leading to Right emancipation (**samma vimutti**) Thus, being endowed with these ten factors one attains arhantship and experiences the fruits of emancipation. It is through the blossoming of the total personality with the attainment of right knowledge and right emancipation that one realizes Arahantship, which really is the goal. As morality leads an individual to concentration, concentration to wisdom and wisdom to emancipation, morality is the first step in the path. V. P. Varma<sup>257</sup> observing this fact says:

"The Buddhist ethical way conceives of Right Living as a preparation for Right Concentration and meditation and hence, according to Buddhism, economic activities have only an instrumental reality. They are at best means... Economic action according to Buddhism, is means, and it has to be moralized in order that it may not impede the attainment of Nirvana".

Thus, economics is not a goal, but a step in the path that makes an individual a person fit to march towards the goal. The significance of this philosophy is specially seen at a time like the present, when certain recent events are forcing the intellectuals to reassess the numerous problems and conflicts that have arisen in the prevailing economic system, which considers economy as the highest goal to be attained by the individual at the expense of everything else.

#### 1.114

Another important fact brought to light in the **Mahacattarisaka Sutta** is that the factors of the path are not to be cultivated separately and severally. This becomes very clear by considering the cultivation of Right Livelihood itself. A prerequisite for this is the clear understanding of what wrong livelihood is, and it is Right View that helps in this. One has to dedicatedly and strenuously follow what one selects as one's right livelihood, and this is Right Effort. One has to proceed along with mindfulness and hence it is the operation of Right Mindfulness. Right Livelihood connotes engagement in righteous communication and righteous action and these are indicated by Right Speech and Right Action. Thus there should be complete harmony among all these factors for successful accomplishment of Right Livelihood. Thus there is a philosophy and a pattern of behaviour based on that, and that is morality (**sila**), which is not a mere theory but a fruitful practice.

The economists have advocated an economy sans - morality, and this has caused many a dilemma. And it is in this context that one sees the real significance of a doctrine that advocates that there

cannot be an economic system devoid of morality and Right View. Hence Varma<sup>258</sup> says;

"It (i.e. the economic ethics of Buddhism) refuses to consider the realm of business as a separate compartment of life which has its own professional ethics, different from the ethics of the other departments. According to Buddhism, life is one integral whole ethical norm seeking to control deviance evil have universal sway".

#### 1.115

Dukkha or suffering is due to craving and ignorance, and the Noble Eightfold Path is the only way of destroying them; this in other words, is the path to Nibbana. When this is clear such questions, as "What is the nature of Nibbana, what happens after the realization of Nibbana, what is the nature of an arahant, become completely irrelevant. What is necessary for a person who desires to put an end to Dukkha is to pursue the path, and not to grapple with futile questions which are the products of mere insatiable curiosity.

As the present is non satisfactory it is imperative to realize a satisfactory state. Hence, highest bliss (**paraman sukham**) becomes the goal. As birth is suffering a state of no-birth is sought. As decay (**jara**), disease (**vyadhi**) mortality (**marana**) and unhappiness (**soka**) are causes of misery, a state free from decay (**ajara**) disease (**avyadhi**), mortality and unhappiness (**asoka**) is desired. Similarly, as the present is a defiled as well as a state of bondage, an undeffiled (**asamkilittha**), bondage-free state is sought after. In short, this state denotes Nibbana, and the search for this state is referred to as the 'noble quest' (**ariyapariyesana**),<sup>259</sup> which in fact, is the essence of Buddhist ethics.

#### 1.116

It is futile to be dealing with all positive and negative epithets of Nibbana. The individual who is subject to dependent origination could analyse only objects that come within the range

of dependent origination. And if dukkha is the main characteristic of all phenomena within this sphere, then an individual should be concerned only with the eradication of dukkha, and not dilly dally about the physical problems. Nibbana could be realized here and now. So why postpone its realization and make the present miserable? This is why the Buddha declared that suffering its arising, its cessation as well as the path to its cessation are found within this fathom long body. As Prof. P. D. Premasiri points out many of these misconceptions about Nibbana is due to the assumption that Nibbana is a state to be realized after an individual's death, and that it is a metaphysical reality.<sup>260</sup> He also adds that early Buddhism does not present any metaphysical ideas about Nibbana, but emphasizes its experiential qualities. It is a positively blissful state reached by a total inner revolution. According to the Buddha's explanation Nibbana is a mental revolution.<sup>261</sup>

Prof. . N. Upadhyaya<sup>262</sup> has also clearly noticed this fact for he says;

"..... the Buddhist approach to Nibbana is thoroughly empirical having no element of metaphysics or theology associated with it... Buddha, therefore, prefers to call it the state of the extinction of suffering and refrains from any speculative description of it".

Facts already presented in relation to social activities of an Arahant also provide evidence to establish the empirical nature of Nibbana as well as to prove that it pertains to this world.

## VII. THE DOCTRINE OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION AND SOCIO- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1.117

When Brahmin Upatissa (lay name of Ven Sariputta) requested Ven Assaji, the junior most of the first five disciples of the Buddha, to explain in brief the teaching he followed the latter uttered the following stanza.

" ye dhamma hetuppabhava tesam hetum tathagato aha  
tesam ca yo nirodho evam vadi mahasamano"<sup>263</sup>

(whatever phenomena that arise due to causes, their cause the Tathagata declared, and he declared also their cessation. The Great Monk is a teacher of such a doctrine)

This itself makes clear that the essence of Buddhism is the doctrine of **Paticcasamuppada** or causality ie. Dependent co-origination. The Buddha himself has declared that he succeeded in destroying all defilements and realizing emancipation because he understood the doctrine of Paticcasamuppada<sup>(264)</sup>. The Mahanidana Sutta<sup>265</sup> records how the Buddha admonished Ven. Ananda not to say that he can easily understand this doctrine which is really profound and which appears also profound. Further, the Buddha pointed out that beings languish in samsara due to their ignorance of this doctrine.

The Mahahatthipadopama Sutta<sup>266</sup> says that the Buddha himself has said that he who sees the **Paticcasamuppada** sees the Dhamma and he who sees the Dhamma sees the **Paticcasamuppada**, thus making **Paticcasamuppada** and Dhamma co-terminus. Prof. W. S. Karunaratne<sup>267</sup> who examined whether the **paticcasamuppada** is the central teaching of Buddhism arrives at the following conclusion.

"Thus the doctrine of the **paticcasamuppada** is not only capable of being explained as the central teaching of the

Buddha's Dhamma on philosophical grounds, but that it is also historically authenticated as having been so".

Prof. Kalupahana<sup>268</sup>, who has done an in-depth study of the subject also opines that it is the central philosophy of Buddhism. Therefore when examining the socio-economic philosophy contained in the **Tripitaka** it is essential to have a clear understanding of this doctrine.

#### 1.118

The **Paccaya Sutta**<sup>269</sup> begins by saying that it presents two points namely, causality and causally conditioned phenomena. What is meant by causality in this context? It is explained as the causal relation between factors leading to sansaric existence and the consequent suffering. The whole process is explained as follows:

Depending on ignorance (**avijja**) arise dispositions (**sankhara**); depending on dispositions arises consciousness (**viññana**), depending on consciousness arise psycho-physical personality (**nama - rupa**), depending on psycho-physical personality arise six gateways of sense perception (**salayatana**) depending on six gateways of sense perception arises contact, (**phassa**) depending on contact arises craving (**tanha**); depending on craving arises clinging (**upadana**); depending on clinging arises becoming (**bhava**); depending on becoming arises birth (**jati**) and depending on birth arise decay death, grief, lamentation etc."

This causal process is the nature of phenomena in its regular pattern (**dhamma -niyama**). This 'nature' or the 'relation' between two phenomena is what is called causality (**Paticcasamuppada**) Prof. W.S. Karunaratne<sup>270</sup> shows that the Tripitaka uses many terms to denote this 'relation'. Some of these terms are; **hetu, paccaya, karana, nidana, sambhava, pabhava, samudaya, nimitta, linga, upanisa, Paticca, paticcasamuppada, uppada, samuppada, nissya, pahuta, jatika, idappachchayata** etc.,

The second point presented by the **Paccaya Sutta** namely, the causally conditioned phenomena (**paticcasamuppanna dhamma**)

shows that every single phenomenon is causally dependent on other phenomena. Regarding the distinction between '**paticcasamuppada**' and '**paticcasamuppanna dhamma**' Prof. Kalupahana<sup>271</sup> makes the following remarks:

"The difference between these two may be made clear if we are to compare this description with what a modern philosopher has to say about the content of our knowledge. Bertrand Russel said that, what passes for knowledge is of two kinds. First is knowledge of facts, second is knowledge of general connection between facts'. (**Human Knowledge, Its scope and limits**, London 1948, p. 459) "Facts" in this description may be compared to **paticcasamuppanna dhamma**, and the 'general connection between facts' with **paticcasamuppada**. These two are inter-related; one cannot speak of causality without referring to causally conditioned phenomena and vice versa".

#### 1.119

Buddhism does not consider **Paticcasamuppada** to be any one's monopoly; it is presented as an empirical fact. **Paccaya Sutta**<sup>274</sup> makes this quite clear when it records that the Buddha has said that whether there Buddhas are in this world or not, **paticcasamuppada** will prevail, for it is the nature of phenomena, the set pattern, the regular order, the conditionality of phenomena. The Buddha comprehends this and makes it known to others. Further, the Sutta<sup>273</sup> enumerates four characteristics of **Paticcasamuppada** namely, objectivity (**tathatha**) necessity (**avitathatha**), invariability (**anannathatha**) and conditionality (**idappaccayata**). The Buddhas can only make it known, others have to comprehend it by themselves, and it is in this context that the Buddha's admonition that 'Tathagatas are only teachers, and striving should be done you yourselves' becomes meaningful.<sup>274</sup> Prof. K. N. Jayatilake<sup>275</sup> discusses this in detail. As this is not a creation by him, but a mere discovery, that the Buddha compared it to the discovery of an ancient path leading to an ancient city.<sup>276</sup>

### 1.120

Even with regard to **Paticcasamuppada** there appear to be much misconception. Even a well known scholar of the calibre of Prof. A. B. Keith<sup>277</sup> has said:

"We can now see the character of chain of causation, it is intended to explain the coming into being of misery."

The above remark of Prof. Keith cannot be considered as whole truth for, he seems to take into consideration only the **Paticcasamuppada** of Twelve Factors, forgetting the general formula which is as follow:

**"Imasmin sati idam hoti  
imassa uppada idam uppajjati  
Imasmin asati idam na hoti  
imassa nirodha idam nirujjhati"**<sup>278</sup>

"When this is present, that comes to be  
from the arising of this, that arises,  
when this is absent, that does not come to be  
on the cessation of this, that ceases".

What is embodied in this short formula is not a mere cause and effect relation. The statements i.e.,

"When this is present that comes to be  
when this is absent, that does not come to be"

bring out the relative dependence of phenomena. Suttas such as **Sattadhatu**<sup>279</sup> and **Nalakalapa**<sup>280</sup> make this fact very clear. The former Sutta points out that light is seen because of darkness, and similarly, well being and space become meaningful only in relation to ill being and matter respectively. As the latter Sutta shows two bundles of reeds can stand only when they are placed against each other; if one falls the other will certainly fall, too. What is brought into focus is the relative dependence of all phenomena, and not a sequential relation between cause and effect. It is because of this relativity that the Buddha's teaching about 'conditionality (**idappaccayata**) becomes meaningful.<sup>281</sup>

The statements "From arising of this that arises" and 'on the cessation of this that ceases' bring out a cause and effect relation like showing how the fruit arises from the seed. The **Samyuttanikaya**<sup>282</sup> explains the operation of this cause and effect relation not only in the biological sphere, but also in other spheres as moral sphere etc., This dual relation that is embodied in this formula should be clearly understood. Prof. Kalupahana<sup>283</sup> draws attention to this.

### 1.121

This fundamental formula has been used on various occasions in numerous ways in early Buddhism. The Twelve Linked formula is only one such exposition. The number of factors and the factor heading the list is not the same always. When dealing with human suffering what is used generally is the Twelve Linked Formula.<sup>284</sup> In the **Dvayatanupassana Sutta**<sup>285</sup> the formula is given as consisting of eleven factors, some of which are different from those found usually enumerated. The **Mahanidana Sutta** has two enumerations, one of nine<sup>286</sup> and another of ten<sup>287</sup> factors, and the formula begins with **viññāna** (consciousness). The **Upanisa Sutta**<sup>288</sup> lists twenty two factors. Though normally **avijja** (ignorance) is given as the cause for arising of dukkha, the **Dhammacakkappavattana**<sup>289</sup> cites **tanha** (craving) as the cause. This is because Buddhism cites neither a first cause nor a single cause, and this is seen from such canonical statements as the first beginning of samsara is not perceivable.<sup>290</sup> The **Paticcasamuppada** formula is not a linear enumeration of factors of Causality, but a circular one, and could commence from any point.<sup>291</sup> **Avijja** is a causally dependent factor, and scholars such as Prof. Jayatilake and Prof. Karunaratne have drawn attention to this fact mentioned in **Avijja Sutta**.<sup>292</sup> The **Sammaditthi Sutta**<sup>293</sup> itself says that **Avijja** arises due to defilements.

### 1.122

What all this clearly shows is that the **Paticcasamuppada** formula does not name a first cause or a single cause for the rising

of the causally dependent phenomena. The **Bija sutta**<sup>294</sup> of the **Khandhakasamyutta** explains on ethical and biological grounds that for a seed to sprout, the seed should be in perfect condition; but this alone is not sufficient for there should be water and the soil should be fertile. The arising of consciousness too is explained similarly. The **Accayika Sutta**<sup>295</sup> explains the causal connection of conditions that contribute to produce a good harvest. These explanations show that any change that takes place in conditions affects the causally conditioned phenomena. By this Buddhist doctrine of causality such other causal theories as divine creation (**Issaranimmanavada**) the theory which holds that everything happens as consequences of former deeds (**pubbekatahetuvada**) and also the theory which rejects all causes and conditions (**Ahetuappaccaya vada**) get nullified. Besides, the **paticcasamuppada** theory affirms the existence of free will.

#### 1.123

The above discussion mainly deals with the arising of samsaric suffering. The Buddha explained social suffering also on the basis of **Paticcasamuppada**. Thus in the **Aggañña**, **Cakkavattisihanada**, and **Kutadanta** suttas the Buddha cites political and socio-economic factors as causes of social suffering. In Suttas such as **Mahanidana**, **Kalahavivada** etc he pays more attention to psychological factors. Leaving the political and socio-economic factors for a detailed analysis later, it is relevant here to examine the psychological causes. The **Mahanidana**, the **Dasuttara** and some suttas in the **Anguttaranikaya** are important in this context. In these, the process leading to suffering is explained as starting from **tanha** (craving). It is shown that craving leads to pursuit, pursuit to gain, gain to decision, decision to desire and passion, these to tenacity, tenacity to possession, possession to avarice, avarice to protection and guard, these to many malpractices such as coming to blows, strife, contradiction, retort, quarrelling, slander, lying etc.<sup>296</sup> The **Aggañña Sutta** also gives a somewhat similar account when it describes the evolution of social institutions.

#### 1.124

Besides explaining the arising of samsaric and social suffering the **Paticcasamuppada** doctrine also helps to understand the world. The scope of this formula is not limited to the explanation of these. Not only does it explain the arising of dukkha, but it also explains the cessation of dukkha. This is why Buddhism is not only a philosophy, but also a means of emancipation. A philosophy or a theory is needed to organise practice, a theory devoid of practice is of no use.<sup>297</sup> The **Paticcasamuppada** provides the practice also for, it leads the individual to understand himself, and to understand both samsaric and social suffering, the cause of the arising of these suffering; and it awakens the individual to realize his ability and responsibility to reach the desired goals by eradicating these causes.

#### 1.125

When analysing the conditions and the phenomena arising through conditions it is seen that there is nothing that passes from causes to phenomena. There is uninterrupted continuity due to arising of effects through concatenation of conditions. This is how the correlation between action (**karma**) and consequences (**vipaka**) takes place. Rebecoming and sansara become meaningful not because of a permanent soul, but in the context of this relation between cause and effect. The doctrine of no-self is also thus causally explained.<sup>298</sup> By seeing the rise and fall of phenomena one naturally gives up the two extremes of Eternalism and Annihilationism. As it avoids these two extremes **Paticcasamuppada** is called the Middle way (**Majjhima patipada**). Whatever is the name used, it means the same thing.

#### 1.126

This shows that all problems concerned with the man and the world have to be solved in accordance with **Paticcasamuppada**. It is so with regard to solving socio-economic problems. It is seen that the world is divided and there are such divisions as race, religion, caste, class and so on. These divisions have led to all kinds

of conflicts., culminating in wars. Mutual understanding and peace have been ruptured, harmony has been shattered, social institutions have been destroyed. These are common features of almost all countries in the world. Could this happen among people who are being guided by the **Paticcasamuppada** philosophy? Two of the stanzas at the end of the **Vasettha Sutta** make clear the causally conditioned nature of the social structure<sup>(299)</sup>. Herein it is said that the world continues to roll on because of action or deeds and these deeds are explained in two other stanzas of the same sutta as the present deeds which make people become known as farmers, tradesmen, merchants, serfs, robbers, soldiers, chaplains, kings, and so on.

This makes it clear that division among the people is not due to divine creation, nor the result of former deeds, nor the result of some kind of determinism, an external force, an incomprehensible fate or even due to some accident. One who accepts the operation of causal laws can grasp this fact clearly. This understanding enables one to know that everything is mutually dependent and their existence and continuation rest on this mutual dependence. This knowledge makes one realize that one's duty is another's right and prompts him to perform his duty properly. This will bring about cessation of causes leading to breach of peace and harmony. Among people who not merely have got familiarized with terms such as 'democracy' and 'socialism' but have well grasped the true sense of such terms, progress or development will take place effortlessly.

#### 1.127

Some present day scholars are puzzled as to how Buddhism, that teaches to work for one's own well being, could justify service for social well being. Prof. Gunapala Dharmasiri<sup>300</sup> offers an answer to this on the basis of **Paticcasamuppada**.

"How does Buddhism recommend and justify other regarding actions? It has several grounds for doing so. One reason stems from the theory of dependent origination (**paticcasamuppada**), which emphasises the fact that

everything originates depending on everything else. Therefore everything own its existence to everything else. Actually it is the **Anatta** doctrine that involves one in altruistic actions. The doctrine of inter-dependence rules out the possibility of a separate soul because nothing can be independent in a world where everything is inter-related to everything else. I cannot think of myself as separate from the rest of the universe because, for example, if I take my body, my body is dependent on plants, animals, water, oxygen, etc. My mind also exists dependently because the existence of thoughts is dependent on same data which are derived from the external world of objects and persons."

#### 1.128

Even at present there is a large section of the population who refuse to acknowledge this true position, but prefer to continue to cling on to the metaphysical, mythical and superstitious belief, and undergo suffering and dissatisfaction without making any attempt to change the prevailing social conditions. Some suffer in silence, some others repent and regret. Yet there are some others who resort to prayer and chanting. None who has properly understood the doctrine of **Paticcasamuppada** would remain silent sacrificing the present. Fruitful social revolutions, social reformations and development activities are usually set in motion by individuals who have really grasped the meaning of **Paticcasamuppada**.

Yet, could this happen? Besides Arahants, can others comprehend this doctrine, and through it solve the problems they are facing? **Kosambiya Sutta**<sup>301</sup> provides the answer to this. This sutta makes it clear that it is not necessary to become an Arahant either to develop right knowledge or to understand the doctrine of **Paticcasamuppada**. Anyone who intelligently works to solve the present problems can do so, even though the knowledge he possesses is not the same as the knowledge regarding things as they are. What one needs is the knowledge to grasp the real nature of present problems, and this would suffice to solve these

problems. As Capra<sup>302</sup> points out a great obstacle that stands in the way of problem solving is the failure to consider and evaluate the problems in their totality, examining the cause and effect relation in them. instead of adopting a fragmented methodology which is a common characteristic of the present academic discipline and government agencies. In making this observation capra either wittingly or unwittingly appears to accept the Buddhist approach to the analysis of these problems namely, the **Paticcasamuppada**.

## Chapter 2

# 2. SOCIAL STRUCTURE ENVISAGED IN BUDDHIST ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY

## 1. THE ORIGIN OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

### 2.1

Of the many views regarding the origin of man and social institution one that was widely accepted during the post-Vedic period was the Brahmanic view of divine creation. As pointed out by Macdonell the earliest reference to this view is in the **Purusa sukta** of the **Rgveda**<sup>1</sup> A stanza in this **Sukta** says that when the Cosmic person (**Purusa**) was sacrificed his mouth became the Brahmana, his arms the Rajanya (i.e. Ksatriya) his thighs the vaisya, and from his feet were produced the sudras and these were the four social grades of the Aryan society of the time.<sup>2</sup> Prof. Wijesekara points out that according to the **Brhadaranyaka Upanisad** this social division was a feature not only of the human society, but also of the divine society.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.2

Though not very well known, the Ajivakas had a theory of their own on this matter, and this is referred to in the **Chalabhijati Sutta**.<sup>4</sup> This theory refers to a sixfold division of the society. They are as follows:

- (i) The black species (**kanhabhijati**): the butchers, poultry farmers, hunters, fishermen, executioners and those who engage in cruel professions.

- (ii) The blue species (**nilakabhijati**) The monks engaged in self tormenting practices, the believers in **Kamma** and efficacy of action (**kiriya**).
- (iii) The red species (**lohitabhijati**): single-robe wearing Niganthas and
- (iv) The yellow species (**halibbhijati**): the white clad laymen and disciples of naked ascetics.
- (v) White species (**sukkhabhijati**): male and female Ajivakas
- (vi) Pure white species (**Parama sukkhabhijati**): Nanda, Vaccha, Kisa, Sankicca and Makkhali Gosala.

This division is not based on the Aryan conception of social division into black and white depending on the complexion of the skin. Prof. Kalupahana<sup>5</sup> thinks that this division was done according to degrees of moral advancement accepted by Ajivakas.

## 2.3

The pali canonical texts citing numerous arguments, reject the belief in divine creation (eg. **Titthayatana Sutta**).<sup>6</sup> The **Chalabhijati Sutta** while rejecting the Ajivaka view, presents the Buddhist idea. It is seen that unlike the Buddhist view both the Brahmic and Ajivaka views emphasize the importance of professing the status quo and present a very deterministic and static view of society.<sup>7</sup> According to the divine creation theory, not only is man incapable of changing the society, but it is also wrong on his part to do so. This theory, which subjugates man to some external power, has been put forward by those factions of the society that desired to enjoy their privileged position and superiority without any opposition. This made man a weakling, completely devoid of free will.<sup>8</sup> Buddhism rejects both Brahmanic divine creation theory and Ajivaka natural determinism, and presents a realistic view based on the idea of evolution which upholds superiority of man.

## 2.4

The Buddhist view on the origin of social institutions is found in the **Aggañña Sutta**. Varma after analysing this Sutta concludes that Buddhism has completely revolutionized the concept of the universe that prevailed among the Brahmans of the time.<sup>9</sup> However, Ven. Prof. Kamburupitiye Ariyasena<sup>10</sup> points out that Varma in his analysis<sup>11</sup> has failed to focus attention on the mental and physical evolution of man which took place due to his contact with earth.

According to the account in the **Aggañña Sutta** the beings who gathered in the **Abhassara** world at the time of the destruction of the world returned from there once more when the earth came into existence. These self-luminous beings lived for a long time in the newly evolving world, enjoying the tasty earth. Through the enjoyment of the tasty earth, craving appeared in their minds. Then their bodies became coarse making them lose their self-lustre. Gradually, due to differences in complexion pride, conceit etc. arose in them. With the disappearance of the tasty earth, outgrowths like mushrooms and various kinds of creepers appeared and finally paddy appeared. With the change of food, environment etc. their physical form underwent further changes, leading to sex differences. The family was the result of sexual intercourse. Then, led by greed, people began to hoard rice which in turn led to the disappearance of self-grown paddy. Now people were forced to cultivate manually. Land and land produce were becoming important commodities and people were forced to set up boundaries and divide the land among themselves. This was the beginning of private property. Some greedy people while watching over their fields stole paddy from another's field. He was caught and advised. When he repeatedly stole, he was punished. Thus stealing, censure, lying, punishment and other corrupt practices arose. The people then having discussed about the situation elected a suitable person from among themselves and entrusted him with the task of dispensing justice for which he was promised a share of their produce. As this person was elected through common consent he was first referred to as '**Maha**

**Sammata'** meaning, elected by the public. As he was the overseer of paddy fields (Khetta), he was called khattiya (skt. ksatriya); and as he made the people happy through his righteous administration he came to be known as 'Raja'! Thus arose the kingship.

While the society was continuing in this manner, there were some who were not quite pleased with the condition in the society. They opted to live in forests and meditate and devote their time to religious pursuits. As they abandoned evil ways they came to be called **Brahmana**. Among them those who devoted themselves to meditation were called **Jhayaka**; those who did religious activities other than meditation were called **Ajjhayakas**. Similarly, the origin of **vaisyas** and **sudras** too, is explained on a functional basis. The Sutta clearly points out that all beings, if they are physically, verbally and mentally restrained, are equally capable, irrespective of caste or class distinctions, of attaining well being here-itself.

## 2.5

Thus the **Aggañña Sutta**, while rejecting the divine creation theory, explains the origin of society as to an evolutionary process set in motion by man himself to fulfil certain social needs. The crux of this sutta, preached to show the baselessness of the Brahmin claim for superiority, is to demonstrate the 'oneness' of mankind, and the functional origin of the caste system<sup>12</sup>. **Vasala**<sup>13</sup> and **Vasettha Suttas** are similar in their purpose. The former says that one becomes a **Brahmana** (i.e. a person of high caste) or a **vasala** (a low caste) not because of his birth, but because of his deeds (kamma). Kamma in this instance does not mean one's past deeds, but one's present actions, his conduct.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, other social institutions (family, private property, kingship, are also explained as man-made and not divine created.<sup>16</sup>

## 2.6

**Aggañña Sutta** emphasises the equality of man by saying "beings who were like unto themselves and not unlike<sup>17</sup>", and as

pointed out also in the **Vasettha Sutta** social divisions are explained as functional divisions.<sup>18</sup> Thus, both these suttas give a causal explanation for the origin of society and social institutions<sup>19</sup> and Prof. Kalupahana says that the Buddha insisted that caste and other divisions in society were functional in origin.<sup>20</sup> As explained in the **Aggañña Sutta**, the complexional differences, which the Brahmins considered as a basic factor for social division, were caused by environmental changes and changes in food habits.<sup>21</sup> Suttas such as **Assalayana** shows that caste distinction is not a universal feature, since in certain countries as Yona and Kamboja there were only two classes namely, masters and servants, and thus, too not a permanent division for depending on economic changes sometime masters became servants and servants became masters.<sup>22</sup> The **Madhura Sutta**<sup>23</sup> further stresses the economic basis of caste division.

## 2.7

Among the numerous suttas that deal with oneness of mankind **Vasettha** is very important for, it argues on sound biological grounds that unlike in the case of plant life and animal Kingdom, where differences of species are manifold and very obvious, that this is not so in mankind. It says that not as regards their hair, head, ears, eyes, mouth, nose, lips or brows, nor as regards neck, shoulders, belly, back, lip, breast, sexual organs, sexual intercourse nor even as regards their hands, feet, palms, nails, calves, thighs, colour or voice are there marks in mankind that make them different species. It says that these divisions in mankind are mere conventional classifications.<sup>22</sup> The observation made by the two professors Malalasekera and Jayatilake on the **Vasettha Sutta** is of special significance.

"It would thus appear that Buddhism is in accord with the findings of modern biologists who explored the doctrines of racism and urged the biological unity of mankind in support of the concept of a common humanity. So when Buddhism asks us to treat all men, irrespective of race or caste, as our fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters or as one family there seems to be a deeper

truth in this statement than that of a mere ethical recommendation”<sup>25</sup>

The **Vasettha Sutta**.<sup>26</sup> clarifies that it is not birth, but one's spiritual advancement that forms the criterion of whether one is high or low. The **Madhura Sutta**<sup>27</sup> also arguing on the same lines shows how evil conduct produces evil results both in this life and in the next and how good conduct produces good results in both worlds. In the **Kanhakatthala**<sup>28</sup> Sutta it is shown that when given equal opportunity people, irrespective of their caste differences are able to perform a task equally well. Similarly, it is also shown that it is so with regard to attainment of salvation.

## 2.8

Thus it is clear from the above account that according to Buddhism these social divisions are neither the result of divine creation nor of one's former deeds, but are mere conventional divisions based on such factors as complexion of skin, wealth, occupation etc. Further it is clear that the Buddhist position is that all are equally capable of achieving both material and spiritual progress by working diligently and intelligently. It is also clear that Buddhism accepts the position that man has the right, the responsibility as well as the strength either to continue, change, modify or even completely abolish any class or caste division that has sprung in society; or he could even build a completely new social system. G.P. Misra<sup>29</sup> makes the following observation.

“Buddha's clear enunciation that “Karma” is one's own etc. goes to suggest that an individual is a pure product of his deeds and it is in his own hands to allow his miseries to continue or to stop them”.

## II. SOME FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIETY

### 2.9

The above account itself brings into focus some of the fundamental characteristics of society. It is seen that both the

divine creation and the natural deterministic theory lead to a static conception of the society. Buddhism rejecting both these, presents a dynamic view. This Buddhist view is based on the acceptance of fundamental factors of phenomena such as change, the recurrence of the evolutionary processes, environmental changes, oneness of mankind as well as individual and social needs, individual differences and so on. According to this Buddhist view all changes in society, for both good and bad, are the outcome of the conflict among these numerous factors. As shown before, the **Chalabhijati Sutta** explains how man could function in six different ways. The interaction and conflict among these factors give rise to social institutions, sustain them, destroy them and even pave way for the rise of new social institutions.

### 2.10

If dynamism is considered a fundamental characteristic of society, then it is not possible to envisage, at any stage of the evolutionary process of the world, a society which is on the whole good or on the whole bad. It is a fact that people normally entertain nostalgic feelings about a glorious past and an ideal future. Ven. Prof. Walpola Rahula<sup>30</sup> clearly shows that entertainment of such thoughts are true for all climes and all times. He further adds that in reality, however, just as in the present even in the past too there had been only a mixture of good and bad and never there had been a perfectly blissful society. This is about those who are disgusted about the present and are lamenting over an imaginary, wonderful past. It is the same with those who expect a totally trouble free future. Certain religions dream about a divine kingdom or an earthly paradise. There are certain philosophies that entertain views about Utopian societies which would contribute to produce a totally different kind of man. The canonical accounts of man and the world show that these are nothing but mere aspirations of man who is unable to truly comprehend the empirical reality. Prof. Kalupahana discussing these issues points out that such aspirations are quite contrary to the Buddhist concept of impermanence and evolution.

As Karl Popper<sup>31</sup> points out it is not logically possible to visualize a total social change and he favours a 'peacemeal social engineering'. According to Kalupahana<sup>32</sup> the Buddha's view presented over two thousand five hundred years ago is also the same. This is also the view that the Buddha entertained about the world when he reflected as to whom he should first preach his Dhamma<sup>33</sup>, for he never thought of serving the totality of mankind in a single effort. Thus a distinctive characteristic of Buddhist social philosophy is its attempt to provide maximum benefit possible without depending on an idealistic society. In doing so its aim is not to run away from the present, but to face it squarely, however unpleasant an experience it may be, and find out the truth and then set about the task.

## 2.11

Here it is important to know the scope of the term 'society' as it is understood in the canonical teachings for, it would help to find out the distinctive features of the Buddhist attitude to society, and its influence on Buddhist social philosophy. Regarding this Prof. Wijesekara<sup>34</sup> observes:

"The Buddhist conception of 'society' would in the deepest ethical sense include all living beings of the world (loka) at a given time, and not only those who are human, but also animals and other lower creatures as well."

The Buddhist attitude is to be compassionate towards all living beings (**sabbe sattha**) and this is very lucidly explained in the **Metta sutta**<sup>35</sup> which says that one should show loving kindness towards all beings just as a mother protects her only child. Provision of protection for birds and beasts is laid down as a specific duty of a Universal Monarch. The **Vanijja sutta**<sup>37</sup> includes trading in beasts and flesh among professions prohibited for Buddhists. It is clearly seen that Buddhism holds the view that human beings are linked, in one way or the other, with all other living beings, and the society is therefore the totality of all such living beings.

## 2.12

Another fact that comes to forefront in the samsaric context is the unique position man has achieved among other living beings. In the **Dhammapada**<sup>38</sup> it is said that birth as a human being is rare indeed. This point is further emphasized in the **Jiggala Sutta**<sup>39</sup> of the **Samyutta nikaya**. It is man that is capable of becoming a Universal Monarch or a Buddha, and also of realizing emancipation. According to Buddhism no other being is equal to man in intellect or potential. There is no problem that cannot be solved through human intellect. About the great human being the Buddha, Prof. Wijesekara<sup>40</sup> says:

"He was the first thinker of India, not to say of the whole world, to give up the theological approach and adopt a rational attitude to such matters".

## 2.13

However, while assigning a special position to man, Buddhism does not consider man to be supreme, having supremacy over others, for, man also exists subject to the law of dependent origination. As pointed out before mind and matter of which man is composed are inter-dependent.<sup>41</sup> Various conditions such as material, environmental social and so on contribute to the development of man.<sup>42</sup> Just as desire even hunger and decay are also legacies of man, even in very prosperous societies.<sup>43</sup> These psychological and economic conditions as well as the fact of impermanency strongly affect man and demonstrate that, though man occupies a special place, he is not supreme<sup>(44)</sup>. As he occupies a position of distinction man is also aware about his unlimited potential and, hence, he should have a sense of modesty and responsibility. He has the ability to discriminate between good and bad, and therefore, he is expected to conduct himself morally. This is how restraint becomes an essential quality in all economic activities, and this is also why all kinds of exploitation, whether it be the exploitation of vegetation, people, or even the physical environment become extremely unjustifiable.

### III. INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

#### 2.14

Buddhism, citing numerous empirical evidence and obvious reasons shows that the division of the society into classes based on colour, wealth, birth, or profession - is a historical event. This division, according to Buddhism, does not bring about any inequality among men. However, Buddhism admits of distinctions based on ethical and spiritual grounds<sup>45</sup>, and these distinctions, unlike those related to caste, wealth etc. which are more externally manifest, are invisible. While it is not easy to recognize an Arahant from his external appearance, he may be known through his behaviour and conduct. Buddhism clearly holds the view, that such diversity of human nature and human potential provide opportunity for fruitful progress of the individual as well as the society.<sup>46</sup>

A perusal of the history of India shows how at one stage the people were divided into two categories as Aryan and non - Aryan. Perhaps, the skin complexion or the language may have been the basis on which this division was done. Buddhist canonical texts also refer to an Ariyan - non - Ariyan division of the people, but this division is based on a totally different criterion.

According to Buddhism people of all castes and classes and all the Aryans and non - Aryans could become Ariyans through a spiritual revolution. What is needed is not any kind of ritual but an inner revolution brought about by leading a morally good life. Then one becomes an Ariya - a noble being.

As revealed in the *Angulimāla Sutta*, Ven. Angulimāla, who did not harm the life of even a tiny insect since his birth into Ariya state (noble state), was earlier a murderer, and was leading an ignoble life<sup>47</sup>. The ignoble practice, as shown in the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*, is low (hīna) vulgar (gāmaṇi) wordly (pothujjanika) and conducive to ill-being (anatta-samhita). The noble practice, on the other hand, is conducive to

the well being (atthasamhita). In these instances the word **anariya** (ignoble) is used synonymously with **pothujjanika** (wordly, ordinary). Thus, it is seen that Buddhism divides the whole mankind into two as noble (**ariya**) and ignoble (**anariya**) on an ethical basis.

The noble persons (**ariya - puggala**) are divided into four pairs or eight types as those who are on the path of stream entrant, (**sotapanna**) once - returner (**sakadagami**), non - returner (**anagami**) and **Arahant**; and those who have attained the fruits of these four states or those who have reached the **sotapanna, sakadagami, anagami and arahant states**. Among these the Arahants, as they have accomplished every thing that is to be accomplished and completed all training, are called '**asekha**', while those belonging to the other seven categories, as they are still on the path undergoing training, are called '**sekha**'.

#### 2.15

Canonical texts consider the majority of mankind to be unlearned ordinary beings or worldling (**assutava puthujjana**). The word '**assutava**' is used in the sense of 'unlearned'. Unlearned of what? The word '**putujjana**' is from '**puthu**' + '**Jana**'. Here **puthu** (skt. **prthag**) means separated or individualized. It has been explained that this word is used to denote a person who believes that he is separate from the rest of mankind.<sup>48</sup> Owing to this attitude a personality view (**sakkaya ditthi**), a soul view (**attanū-ditthi**) gets deeply rooted in such a person. This leads to the belief in 'I' and 'Mine' which firmly establishes him in the belief in a soul. Buddhism analyses the mentality and the resulting behavioural pattern of such a worldling, comparing them with those of an '**ariya puggala**', a noble being. The *Mahāsaccaka Sutta*<sup>49</sup> presents the distinction between their behavioural pattern and demonstrates the unrestrained behaviour of the worldlings as against the restrained behaviour of noble when they are faced with vicissitudes of life.

The *Dutiyalokadhamma sutta*<sup>50</sup> of the *Anguttaranikaya* also makes this distinction. This sutta also makes clear that while the

ordinary worldlings being overwhelmed by pleasant and unpleasant experiences finally come to suffering, the noble ones understanding the real nature of things manage to avoid conflict and become free.

Failing to understand the doctrine of **Paticcasamuppada**, or in other words, due to the lack of knowledge regarding things as they really are, one falls into the category of a worldling who experiences dukkha. Hence a majority of the mankind, whether clergy or laity, are worldlings.

In the **Anisamsa Vagga**<sup>51</sup> of the **Anguttaranikaya** it is said that as long as one perceives phenomena as permanent one will not be able to attain emancipation.

From these evidence it is possible to identify two kinds of worldlings (**Puthujjanas**)

- (i) Unlearned worldlings (**assutava puthajjana**) who consider phenomena to be permanent, in whom the notions of 'I' and 'Mine' are deeply rooted; who get deeply attached to pleasurable feelings that torment the mind; being discontent are immersed in dukkha.
- (ii) As they have begun to observe all phenomena as impermanent they have a smattering knowledge of reality. They have just begun to see things in their true nature<sup>52</sup>.

## 2. 16

The eight kinds of people who have reached the noble state have already been described. In the **Ketagiri Sutta**<sup>53</sup> the Buddha admonishes the 'trainees' (**sekha**) to strive diligently to calm and restrain both the body and the mind. But those who are trained (**asekha**) i.e. the Arahants need not make any special attempt to restrain themselves for, they have fully cultivated the Four Foundations of Mindfulness and are, therefore, not liable to become confused. This is not so with the trainees who have only partially cultivated the Four Foundations of Mindfulness<sup>54</sup>. The **Sekha Sutta**<sup>55</sup> lays down a criterion to distinguish between the **Sekhas** and **Asekhas**.

The Buddha clearly says that Arahantship cannot be attained at the beginning itself. One has to follow a graduated course and this is why mention is made of seven kinds of trainees who have reached different levels of advancement. One who has just entered into the noble state for the ordinary worldling stage is called a "**Sotapanna**" (Stream entrant). He has got rid of three fetters namely, personality view (**sakkaya-ditthi**) sceptical doubt (**vicikicca**) and attachment to rules and rituals (**silabbata paramasa**)<sup>56</sup>. As he would not commit any of the five heinous crimes or accept wrong views, he is certainly destined to attain enlightenment. Hence he will not be born in any of the four woeful states. Though he may commit wrongs through speech, body and mind he would never hide any such evil.<sup>57</sup> According to the **Anisamsa Sutta** there are six good consequences of the attainment of the **Sotapatti stage**, and one such consequence is his knowledge about the doctrine of Dependent Origination<sup>58</sup>. The next stage in the path is called the **Sakadagami**, (Once-returner). Reaching this stage one manages to greatly reduce one's craving, hatred and confusion. The third stage is called **Anagami**. Such one has completely destroyed the five lower fetters and, hence, he would not return to or be born in this world again.<sup>59</sup> As both sensual desire and ill-will are completely destroyed in him, he becomes unfit to lead a household life. Yet he could remain in the household observing celibacy.

The last stage in the noble spiritual path is described in the canonical texts as that the arahant is free from defilements, has completed the noble living, accomplished all that has to be accomplished; has destroyed all fetters of existence and that he is totally completely safe. The **Sandaka Sutta** says that such a noble being would not indulge in killing, stealing, sexual intercourse, lying and enjoying things that has been hoarded up, as it is normally done in lay life.

## 2.17

The transition from the worldling stage to that of a noble does not take place abruptly. It has already been pointed out that there are two categories of worldlings. The canonical texts also describe

two stages called the **Saddhanusari** and **Dhammanusari**. The former is a stage in which, though one has no deep trust in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha based on an understanding about their virtues, yet has some sort of faith, an affection towards the Buddha that has arisen in him as a result of his on going cultivation of the faculties of faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. The latter indicates a stage in which some understanding of the Dhamma begins to dawn.<sup>62</sup> This state, in which there is neither the quick and rapid grasp of the doctrine, nor destruction, knowing them through wisdom<sup>63</sup> is described in the **Okkanti Samyutta**<sup>64</sup> as a righteous stage beyond the ordinary worldling state.

Not much attention has been paid by scholars to this intermediary stage between the worldling and the noble.<sup>65</sup> According to the **Okkanthi Samyutta** the main factor that helps to get away from the worldling state is the ability to view everything namely, the internal sense faculties, the external sense objects, the five aggregates as impermanent. The **Culagopalaka Sutta**<sup>66</sup> employs an apt simile to explain how '**Saddhanusari** and '**Dhammanusari**' become new-comers to the noble stage. They are compared to a day old calf that attempts to cross the river being urged by the mother cow's call. The **Okkanti Samyutta** also says that these two do not deserve to die without realizing the fruit of **Sotapatti**. This means that they have the potential of becoming **Sotapanna** in this very life<sup>67</sup>.

## 2.18

This understanding of the social structure in accordance with the differences in individual faculties and fruits attained leads us to a number of conclusions regarding the society specially to a conclusion that affects the economic philosophy.

- (i) Though complexion, birth, wealth and such other factors have influenced the categorization of beings, these are not proper standards to be used when deciding whether a person is high or low. The whole human kind should be treated with equality, friendliness and impartiality.

- (ii) That individuals differ in their abilities and maturity and, hence, activities pertaining to the two spheres namely, mundane and supra-mundane should be formulated accordingly.
- (iii) Beings, as long as they fail to obtain even a mere glimpse of impermanency of all Phenomena, would neither understand suffering, nor see its cause nor approach the path leading to its cessation.
- (iv) With the dawning of initial understanding about the three characteristics of phenomena one begins to sense the real nature of things, that is he becomes aware that they are causally conditioned. This leads him towards the path. He gets rid of the soul-view, and consequently also his attachment to rites and rituals. This would be his first contact with freedom. This is the attainment of the **Sotapanna Stage**.
- (v) Along with this attainment he is able to put limitations to his endless torments of suffering, to the continuous stream of becoming. Then his final release is assured, and there is no mere going stray. As his craving, hatred and confusion are markedly reduced, his sansaric journey gets shortened. Yet, as his sensual desires, ill-will, conceit and such other defilements are not totally eradicated, he could continue as a householder enjoying the company of wife and children. Thus, it is seen that even a pleasure enjoying householder has his release assured for, he has a definite place in the Buddhist path of spiritual progress. In him one could see a good being, who enjoys worldly pleasures, yet who is righteous and restrained.
- (vi) By giving up enjoyment of sensual pleasures, he could reach the non-returner stage (**sakadagami**). Though it is possible for a lay person to realize Arahantship, it is imperative for him to give up his household life, because as an Arahant he will not indulge in sexual relations, production or hoarding of wealth and property.

- (vii) The Sangha community epitomizes the ideal society. However as the above mentioned features are not generally found in the whole Sangha, it has to be surmized that this ideal state exists only among those who have fully perfected their character. It is further seen that the lay community is also capable of developing certain of these features in accordance with circumstances.

#### IV. SOCIAL ETHICS

##### 2.19

At this point it is far more relevant and important to examine some of the fundamental principles of social ethics that are found constantly emphasized in the scriptures, than to collect all ideas scattered throughout the texts. This will enable one to understand the impact of these principles on the moulding of the economic philosophy. The concept of worship of directions which demonstrates the role of the individual in the society will be dealt with under the discussion on family life. The concepts of the four sublime states (**Brahmavihara**) and the four modes of hospitality (**sangahavatthu**) would be discussed here. Prof. P. D. Premasiri<sup>68</sup> in a paper presented at the 13th International Buddhist Conference makes the following observation.

"Buddhism teaches two acts of virtues that are said to have important social implications. These virtues are in fact the positive aspects of Buddhist morality, going beyond mere non-doing of certain evil acts. Both these sets of virtues are to be cultivated in opposition to the negative mental traits such as greed, selfishness, envy, malice etc."

The first of these sets is the **Brahmavihara** and the second **Sangaha vatthu**. Both the Buddha<sup>69</sup> and his disciples<sup>70</sup> practised **Brahmavihara**.

##### 2.20

They are called **Brahmavihara** because even the great Brahma is said to have practised them<sup>71</sup>. The term '**vihara**' is used in this

context to indicate that these are or should be constantly present in the mind. They are limitless and, hence, called **Appamañña**. An individual who cultivates these qualities is beyond all biases and prejudices and, above all, beyond all kinds of limitations such as those pertaining to race, nationality, religion, caste, class, clan and so on.<sup>72</sup> The **Brahmavihara** are extremely important for personality development. According to Dr. Gunapala Dharmasiri<sup>73</sup>

"However, even the exclusive cultivation of these virtues would take one very close to the ultimate realization because these virtues have many Nirvanic features or characteristics."

Ven. Nyanaponika<sup>74</sup> very succinctly presents the importance of these **Brahmaviharas** in relation to social ethics.

"They are said to be excellent or sublime, because they are the right, or ideal way of conduct towards living beings (**sattesu samma patipatti**). The four attitudes of mind provide in fact the answer to all situations arising from social contact. They are the great removers of tension, the great peacemakers in social conflict, the great healers of wounds suffered in the struggle of existence, levelling the social barriers, builders of harmonious communities, awakeners of slumbering, magnanimity long forgotten, revivers of joy and hope long abandoned, promotion of human brotherhood against the forces of egotism."

##### 2.21

The first of the **Brahmavihars** is loving kindness or friendliness (**Metta**). The **Metta Sutta** describes how **Metta** is to be cultivated. It says that just as a mother protects her only child, just so one should also cultivate loving kindness towards all those who are born and even seeking to be born, towards all those who are big or small, tall or short, fat or thin, near or far, seen or unseen and so on.<sup>75</sup> The **Kakacupama Sutta** says that the one who cultivates the ideal state of loving kindness should not harbour any thought of ill - will even against a person who harms him by cutting off his limbs.<sup>76</sup> The story of Ven. Punna, who volunteered to go to Sunaparanta

inhabited by violent people shows clearly the greatness of those who possess a mind nurtured with this loving kindness.<sup>77</sup>

## 2.22

The **Dhammapada** clearly states that hatred cannot be appeased through hatred.<sup>78</sup> It is seen that the negation of hatred is friendliness and that **Metta Sutta**<sup>79</sup> compares this to the state of the mind of a mother who protects her only child. Herein one could see both the negative and positive aspects of Buddhist social ethics. Varma<sup>80</sup> who notices both these aspects remarks that

“..... But Buddhism is not content only with the negative way of formulation by emphasising non-violence. It also preached the positive fullness of kindness..”

Further he<sup>81</sup> states that

“From the sociological point of view **ahinsa** and **maitri** are principles of rational harmony and universal love. **Maitri** is the creative force of social development and it can safely act as a deterrent and counterpoise to the dissimilar and disharmonious forces of social tensions, contradictions and struggles. **Ahinsa** and **maitri** not only lead to the growth of internal harmony, but they also result in the growth of spontaneous sympathy and a sense of dynamic identification with all living beings in their sorrow and suffering. Thus cultivation of **ahinsa** and **maitri** can generate also a sense of inner fraternity. This kind of brotherliness is needed in the growingly impersonal civilizations of the modern industrial world.”

This observation strengthens the position taken up by Prof. Wijesekara<sup>82</sup> who says that the “concept of peace appear as a pivotal point in the Buddhist system of social ethics.”

## 2.23

**Metta** or **Maitri** should be distinguished from a few other mental states that have a close resemblance to it. When it is said

that one should cultivate metta just as a mother does towards her only child, it becomes clear that it should be done without any expectation of personal gain. It is not love, for love generates both unhappiness and fear. That is why the **Dhammapada** admonishes that love should be got rid of.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, **metta** is neither a sensual, nor a sexual nor even a feeling of craving.<sup>84</sup> Even the affection shown to those who are dear to one, is a kind of discriminative feeling. **Metta** denotes a demonstration of a friendly and kind mental state to all alike, to one's friends and foes, without making any distinction. It generates a unique force that unites all beings irrespective of any kind of division or barrier. As it obliterates all differences, from all minor individual differences to all differences that lie as root causes of war, **metta** becomes the most vital and fundamental human force in social ethics. As metta shatters all political, economic, social or cultural differences and conflicts and brings about development of all beings the **Itivuttaka**<sup>85</sup> says that all other wholesome states are not worth a one-sixteenth portion of **metta**.

## 2.24

**Karuna**, or compassion the second of the four Brahmaviharas, is explained as the trembling that takes place in the mind of the virtuous when they happen to see others in distress.<sup>86</sup> It has been pointed out that such words as ‘**anukampa**’ or ‘**daya**’ conveys the same meaning.<sup>87</sup> while all living beings become the object of **metta**, only those who are suffering become the object of **karuna**. However, as all beings are subject to suffering, they naturally come within the purview of **karuna**. One who cultivates **metta** equates others with himself and pervades them all with the same friendliness. **Karuna** activates one to save others who are in suffering. If one volunteers in a selfless, self-sacrificing, intelligent and skillful manner to help others, then that could be called **karuna**. The necessity of a virtue like **karuna** is all the more felt in a world beset with all sorts of calamities and distresses, both natural and man made. Hence, **karuna**, just as **metta**, is or even more an essential virtue for the sustenance of the world.

## 2.25

The third aspect is '**mudita**', or altruistic joy, the ability to rejoice at another's success and prosperity. Human beings, when they see the success of others naturally tend to compare that successful state of the other with one's own condition. If one observes that another is enjoying more success, he tends to get mentally upset and even begins to harbour feelings of envy against the successful one. This could generate effects harmful to the society. If one can overcome this mental agitation and remain appreciating another's success, such an attitude would provide a good foundation for social peace and harmony. Thus, it is seen that **mudita** epitomizes the victory of unselfishness over selfishness. Though not often discussed **mudita** is undoubtedly, a virtue that is conducive to both individual and spiritual advancement as well as to social progress.

## 2.26

The fourth aspect of **Brahmavihara** is (**upekkha**) equanimity. This is the ability to remain unmoved and unperturbed by censure and praise one would receive. Hence, this is a virtue that is of special significance to social workers. At times it is equated with '**samanattata**' equality.<sup>88</sup> It connotes the meaning of acting in such a way as not to disparage others and praise oneself. It is seen that this virtue springs as a result of realistically understanding the nature of mutual social relations as well as through a deep understanding of the operation of the law of **karma**. Though its social relevance is not quite obvious as in the case of other three factors, equanimity or '**upekkha**' provides the firm foundation necessary for the meaningful establishment of these three factors.<sup>89</sup>

Irrespective of religious considerations the **Brahmaviharas** have to operate in the minds of human beings if society is to function as a civilized organization. The society will be a pleasant place to live in, depending on the proportion of the cultivation of these virtues. On the contrary, the society will be rough, rigid and unpleasant in proportion to the decline of these qualities.

## 2.27

As enumerated in the **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>90</sup> the four '**sangahavatthu**' are charity (**dana**) pleasant words (**piya vacana**) beneficial actions (**atthacariya**) and equality (**samanattata**). These are so important in social life that these are compared to an axle of a wheel. These are referred to as the factors that contribute the greatness of the wise. Similarly in the **Hatthakalavaka Sangaha Sutta** the Buddha praises Hatthaka Alavaka for faithfully observing these practices when conducting social relations<sup>91</sup>.

Both these canonical references are of extreme significance with regard to social ethics. So pivotal are they to social ethics that they are compared to the axle knob of a chariot. Further to their cohesive power their unifying power is such that it is compared to the bond that exists in parent - children relationship. The **Metta Sutta** also uses a similar simile to bring out the close relationship that could be developed among beings through the cultivation of **metta**. Even such close relationships could be ruptured if the four '**Sangahavattu**' are not duly cultivated. The chariot of society would not move forward if this axle-knob is not there<sup>92</sup>.

## 2.28

The first in the list of four '**sangahavatthu**' is charity (**dana**). One aspect of charity is giving of worldly requirements such as food, clothes, shelter, medicine etc. One could also give one's labour, and this is, generally referred to as '**sramadana**'. But foremost among all forms of **dana** is '**dhammadana**' giving of dhamma.<sup>93</sup> The practice of charity has been emphasized on two considerations, personal and social. Craving coupled with ignorance causes **dukkha**.<sup>94</sup> Craving leads to possessiveness, greed, attachment and such other selfish behaviour, that contribute to strengthen the false notion of 'self'. Charity which is the opposite of craving helps to get rid of these selfish qualities, hoarding, possession and so on. The culmination of charity is seen in renunciation (**nekkhamma**), which lays the foundation for an individual's spiritual progress.

In elucidating the concept of charity texts lay more emphasis on its social relevance. Non-charity leads to hoarding, bringing about scarcity elsewhere. This causes imbalance and disparity, and even exploitation of resources. This will cause quick diminishing and even destruction of resources. This is well described in the **Aggañña Sutta**.

For varied reasons all do not receive equally. Whereas some receive more, others receive less. The non-charitableness of those who receive more is one of the causes that leads to the widening of the gap between those who have and those who have not. Then the latter begins to feel jealous about the former. This leads to quarrels, and conflicts, damaging peace and harmony. Therefore, sharing is necessary, specially where there is a marked disparity between the rich and the poor. The **Kosambiya Sutta**<sup>75</sup> explains this clearly and points out that even what is obtained by begging should be shared with others.

In the field of politics and governance charity becomes still more important. Both the **Kutadanta** and the **Cakkavattisihanada Suttas** explain this very eloquently. The latter sutta shows how misdirected charity even causes unexpected social problems. These Suttas explain the special significance of charity in the process adopted by rulers to minimize the gap between the rich and the poor.

## 2.29

The second item in **sangahawattu** is '**piyavajja**' (pleasant words). As explained in the **Saleyyaka Sutta**<sup>96</sup> means to abandon harsh speech and use speech that is pleasant to the ear and heart, speech that is refined and pleasing to many. Falsehood, harsh speech, slander and idle talk are not appreciated by anyone. Therefore, it is their opposites that should be cultivated. Words uttered through anger, jealousy, selfishness, conceit, greed are all provocative and unpleasant. Such speech can only cause rifts in society. Words spoken by an individual whose heart is filled with compassion, kindness, equality, charity and concern for others are

always dear and pleasant. Such words are capable of dispelling old rifts, hatred, anger and, forging new bonds of friendship, and such instances are commonly seen in society. It is just common knowledge that harsh speech uttered through conceit due to power, wealth, high office, caste and such other reasons disrupt interpersonal relations in society. It is seen that often words alone suffice to stabilize friendship, to strengthen relationships, to induce workers to perform their jobs honestly and increase production. Undoubtedly of all forms of communication speech is the most effective one. Speech is a special ability of man, and language is his special creation. If man can use language properly for noble means of communication, social life would be extremely pleasant and fruitful.

## 2.30

'**Atthacariya**' is benevolent action. The term '**attha**' is used in canonical texts both in a mundane and supramundane sense i.e. in a worldly and spiritual sense. In the '**Sangahavatthu**' it is used more in a mundane sense and this is because of its impact on strengthening social relations or securing social peace and harmony. A stanza in the **Suttanipata**<sup>97</sup> suggests that among the average individuals mutual relationships are evaluated according to the benefits that accrue to individuals through such relationships. It is seen that another's well being could be effected even through speech. Thus, good advice, guidance, encouragement and such acts involving speech amount to working for the well being of others. However, bodily actions appear to be still more important. In the Buddha's admonition to monks to go on tour for the well being and happiness of many etc. it is the spiritual or ethical aspect of '**attha**' that is more emphasised. Yet, whatever action, mental, physical or verbal aimed at the well being of others is '**atthacariya**'. The opposite action not only brings about the downfall of the society, but even the ruination of the individual.

## 2.31

'**Samanattata**' or equality is the fourth item in the four modes of hospitality. It was shown earlier that the term '**upekka**'

(equanimity) is sometimes used in the sense of '**samanattata**'. Herein '**atta**' means oneself. Equality or '**samanattata**' means to consider oneself as being equal or similar to others and to act with such understanding. This enables one to do away with such considerations as 'high' and 'low', 'my', 'mine' and 'not mine'. It dispels one's conceit. It will prevent selfishness from rising above selflessness. When practising equality there would not be any dichotomy between one's benefit, 'others benefit' for, they would become meaningful as two aspects of a single concept. What happens is that when one is working for the benefit of another who deserves help one would place himself in the position of the person who deserves help and then begins to work for his good. This is nothing other than acting through compassion (**karuna**), altruistic joy (**mudita**) and loving kindness or friendliness (**metta**).

Thus in '**samanattata**' is embodied the totality of the functions of the four Brahmaviharas. Equanimity (**upekkha**) and equality (**samanattata**) will grow into subtle social factors in proportion to the understanding one obtains regarding causally conditioned nature of the individual life and social institutions. In a consumer oriented society, where progress is measured on the basis of the amount of consumption, where relations, friends and neighbours are engaged in a endless day and night rat-race, it is of paramount importance to understand the significance of equality. It is only through equality that it is possible to raise the society to a level that makes it suitable for humans. This understanding and consequent action would certainly not turn the society into a paradise. Yet, it is possible that at least wars which threaten the existence of all beings would disappear; at least then there would no longer be those who die of starvation among others who are given to over indulgence in sensual pleasures.

## V. THE NUCLEUS SOCIAL UNIT - THE FAMILY

### 2.32

Once a lay disciple called Dhammika inquired from the Buddha as to which discipleship is better of the two i. e., that of one who

renounces household life and enters the order or one who remains in the household and conducts himself as a pious lay devotee. In explaining his position on this issue the Buddha first lays bare the conduct of a recluse and then shows that a lay person is unable to follow this conduct completely. Then he presents the conduct that suits the lay disciple.<sup>98</sup> However, the Buddha considers both these groups as his disciples. In the **Vyagghapajja Sutta**<sup>99</sup> he directly preaches a mode of religious conduct that is conducive to the worldly well being as well as to the spiritual well being of lay disciples given to enjoyment of household pleasures. A similar teaching was taught to Brahmin Ujjaya<sup>100</sup>. Addressing Sigala the Buddha explained that a layman who engages in worshipping the 'six directions' is a noble disciple and that kind of worship is a part of Buddhist way of life<sup>101</sup>. Herein he gave a novel Buddhistic interpretation to the old Brahman concept of 'six directions'. The husband-wife relationship is called the '**sadara - brahmachariya**', connoting a sense of sacred family life<sup>102</sup>. Household happiness is referred as 'contentment with one's wife (**sadarasantutthi**)'<sup>103</sup>. The **Sakka - namassana Sutta**<sup>104</sup> says even the Sakka, the king of gods, salutes a homemaker who leads a righteous life, looking after the well being of his wife and children. Further the Buddha says that even a minor charitable act performed by a hardworking poor man who righteously maintains his family is far more valuable than a sacrifice of great magnitude.<sup>105</sup> By showing that a person like Isidatta, who did not observe celibacy but led a righteous household life, was able to attain the stage of a Non-returner (**sakadagami**), the Buddha made it abundantly clear that a lay person too could tread the Noble Path.<sup>106</sup> The Nikayas are filled with reference to male and female lay devotees who were capable of experiencing higher spiritual attainments.<sup>107</sup> The fact that the discharge of social obligations within the family is described as a 'form of worship' is indeed very significant.<sup>108</sup>

All these show that Buddhism considered family life as a firmly established social institution and that the rightously led family life as a noble way of life. These references also completely debunk Max Weber's<sup>109</sup> view that

"..... These devotees tended to lack altogether any fixed status in the religious community, as was originally the case with Buddhist Upasakas....."

### 2.33

The **Rukkadhamma Jataka** praises the group life led among the relatives.<sup>110</sup> Similarly, the **Sigalovada Sutta** seems to praise the extended family system. The **Uggaha Sutta** shows that according to the Buddhist concept of family even uncles and aunts are considered as members of the family. Karel Werner<sup>111</sup> opines that.... family life of at least three generations living together or in proximity with close contacts is an ideal not to be discarded.

### 2.34

Of the varied dimensions of family relations, the husband-wife relationship is of prime importance for, husband- wife union is the beginning of family life. This is clearly seen from the **Aggañña Sutta** which explains how union between man and woman led to the construction of houses, and consequently to settled life. The **Sigalovada Sutta** enumerates five duties a husband owes to the wife who is referred to as the 'western quarter'<sup>112</sup>. These include the duty of a husband to show respect to the wife, not to insult her, being faithful to her, giving her authority and presenting ornaments etc., The first two of these are purely Buddhist innovations in a society where women were not highly regarded.<sup>113</sup> The accepted Brahmanic view was that women were far below men in social status. However, in the **Samvasa Sutta**<sup>114</sup> the Buddha has pointed out that a successful family life is really like a union between a god and a goddess, and in contrast it is said that an unsuccessful family life is like a union between two corpses, and this makes it clear that either the husband or wife or both of them could fall into the category of a god or a corpse and contribute either to the success or failure of married life. Prof. Lily de Silva<sup>115</sup> argues that men and women are equal as they do not have innate high or low qualities in them. But whether they are high or low is dependent on their virtue and wisdom. Therefore, she holds that both men and women

have the potential to rise to a high level; but if they fail to develop the necessary qualities they would fall down the scale and become mean.

### 2.35

There are many Suttas that deal with family life from different perspectives. For example, the **Samvasa Sutta**<sup>116</sup> considers these issues on the grounds of husband-wife compatibility. So are the two Suttas entitled **Nakulasamajivi**<sup>117</sup>. How disparity in age adversely affects family life is shown in the **Parabhava Sutta**.<sup>118</sup> The ill - effects of extra-marital relations on family life is often discussed.<sup>119</sup> The third of the five precepts directly also pertains to this issue. The **Vasala Sutta**<sup>140</sup> condemns such relation with other women as low and mean. The **Saleyyaka Sutta**<sup>121</sup> clearly shows who these 'other women' are, while showing harmful effects of extra-marital relation on family life. The Buddha explains also the proper mode of behavior that would enhance the stability and happiness of family life. It is clearly seen that the provision of cosmetics and ornaments etc. a duty often observed in default by most of the husbands is emphasised by the Buddha to promote happiness in family life. In this point Ven.Prof Walpola Rahula<sup>122</sup> observes:

"The fact that the Buddha did not forget even such a thing as the gifts a husband should make to his wife shows how understanding and sympathetic were his humane feelings towards ordinary human emotions".

Similarly, the Buddha has advocated the delegation of more responsibilities to wife with regard to household economic affairs and general household decision making.<sup>123</sup>

### 2.36

Just as the **Sigalovada Sutta**, the **Uggaha Sutta**, also enumerates the duties and responsibilities of a wife towards the husband. The five duties of a wife as enumerated in the **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>24</sup> are (1) acquiring proficiency in the family professions

(2) treating and administering the attendants (3) being faithful to the husband (4) protection of the wealth earned by the husband and (5) acquiring proficiency in all affairs. These are further elaborated in the **Uggaha Sutta**.<sup>125</sup>

### 2.37

These accounts show that just as the husband the wife also has an equal responsibility in forgoing stability and happiness in family life. Conjugal fidelity, pleasant speech, restrained behaviour compatible and pleasant conduct are considered as factors that enhance affection and love between husband and wife. Wife has to shoulder a great responsibility in nurturing harmonious relations in the family. For this she has to show concern and due regard to in-laws, to husband's friends, teachers and religious dignitaries and even to house-hold help-mates and employees. She has to contribute to the economic stability and progress of the family by mastering the professions engaged in by the husband by acquiring organisational ability and being energetic. Thus it is seen that both husband and wife share equally the responsibility of making the family life a success. This not only assures happiness and stability of family life, but also helps to solve problems in society.

### 2.38

Another vital aspect in family life is parent - child relationship. Here the term parent has a wider connotation for it could refer to the parents of the husband or the wife, in which the husband and wife become children; or it may refer to husband and wife and then the children as their own progeny. The high esteem in which the parents are held is seen from epithets '**brahma**' (holy, noble), '**pubbacariya**' (first teachers) '**pubba devata**' (primary deities) and '**ahuneyya**' (deserving adoration)<sup>126</sup>. The parents bring up children, maintain them and acclimatize them to the world. As they have been of great service, the children should reciprocate by providing them with all their basic needs such as food and clothing and offer personal services such as bathing them and so on.<sup>127</sup> The

**Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>128</sup> enumerates the reciprocal duties of parents and children. When a family takes upon itself the responsibility of caring for and maintaining the old parents, the society is relieved of that responsibility. There would be no need for Homes for Elders. And generation gap also would disappear, dispelling also any consequential generation conflict. The tender affection envisaged between the parents and children is expressed in numerous ways. The **Mitta Sutta**<sup>129</sup> refers to the mother, as the friend at home. The **Vatthu Sutta**<sup>130</sup> too calls the wife, the best friend and children the most valuable wealth. The **Kutika Sutta**<sup>131</sup> compares the mother to the hut, wife to the nest and children to the line of progeny. In the **Bandhu Sutta**<sup>132</sup>, the Buddha declares that the attachment one develops towards the wife and children as a strong bond. The bonds that exist between different family members are graphically described in the scriptures. Thus the **Metta Sutta** says that the most noble bond that could exist between two persons is the bond that prevails between a mother and a child. The **Mahasudassana Sutta** cites the bond between the father and the son as the noblest bond. The **Samvasa Sutta** compares the noble relationship that prevails between the husband and wife to a bond that exists between a god and a goddess.

### 2.39

Just as the inter-personal relation between family members, the inter-personal relation found between people connected to the family, too, are discussed in texts. Besides the immediate family members there are others such as servants, help-mates, workers, employees etc. who are considered as coming within the family unit. The phrase, '**putta-dara - dasa - kammakara-porisa**' suggests that all of them were categorized broadly as coming under the family unit. It is the duty of both the husband and wife to look after these people. Assigning work, paying them wages, providing medical care, nursing, granting them leave at the proper time, giving them bonus etc. are among the duties ascribed to the masters, that is to the husband and wife, who are the chief householders. When treated in this manner they too would

reciprocate appropriately. Seeing to the welfare of religious personnel, teachers, neighbours and visitors, and even that of departed beings are all much emphasised in Buddhist household ethics. Friends and friendship are clearly dealt with in the **Sigalovada Sutta**. It is trust or reliability that is considered the essence of relationship, and this is directly mentioned in the **Dhammapada**. Then it is seen that social factor is pivotal for both economic stability and spiritual progress.

#### 2.40

The family unit exerts much influence over the economic affairs of both the individual and society. The advice given to Sigala makes it clear that a family life could be started only after accumulating a fair amount of wealth. Then, as the well being of family members is assured, the society will not be burdened with the responsibility of maintaining either the elders, orphans or women. As the children are heirs to the parental legacy their future problems would be solved at least to a certain extent. Perhaps, their problems pertaining to land and other numerous necessary items would also be solved when they inherit the legacy. They would not only have a secure foundation to commence family life, but would also be able to progress further. As the wife is also required to obtain proficiency in husband's business the family would not come to ruin even in an unexpected death of the husband<sup>133</sup>. This is suggested in Suttas such as Uggaha and Nakula.

It is seen that generally a particular craft or industry develops around a family. Through such families some of the needs of the neighbours, friends, employees etc. would be fulfilled. Such families would extend their support to religious ones. This is why the well secured family becomes the most vital and fundamental unit of the society<sup>134</sup>. This is why the **Kutadanta Sutta**<sup>135</sup> highly evaluates happy and contented families.

#### 2.41

With regard to social ethics herein one should clearly understand the mutual relation between rights and obligations or duties. All members in a society have certain duties to discharge.

For example, as a husband one should first be faithful before trying to find out whether the wife is guilty of infidelity. Before blaming the children for failing to look after him in his old age, a father must make sure that he had well performed his duty of looking after the children. It is the quality of a noble being to perform his part of the duty irrespective of whether others are properly reciprocating or not. One who does not discharge the duty incumbent upon him should not complain that he is not getting his right. Just as the master's duty is the servant's right, just so the servant's duty is the master's right.

Such is the inter-connection, the inter dependence between duties and rights. When all individuals discharge their duties, there is no room for any fights for rights. This makes it quite clear that before stopping the demand for rights, its imperative that one must discharge the duties.

#### 2.42

The unorganized and unrestrained nature of family units in countries such as U.S.A. and U.S.S.R (the latter till recently followed a communist economic policy) is seen from the number of divorces that takes place in them. The situation is so grave that it is even weakening the economic structures of those countries. People have now begun to pay more attention to the question of strengthening the family unit structure. But this undoubtedly is a very complex task. Though the divorce rates in these countries have fairly decreased in the last few years, yet comparatively these rates are high. There are many families whose conjugal lives are extremely unhappy. These factors exert harmful effects on children, also cause psychological stress in men and women. Consequently their output and their general activities suffer. In fact Gorbachev<sup>136</sup> himself had made such observations.

Regarding the present state of the family in western countries Karel Werner<sup>137</sup> makes the following observation:

"The institution of the family has suffered greatly as a result of these developments. An extended family in which at least

three generations would live together is now an almost unknown phenomenon in the west. A quarter of marriages end in divorce, one in every five babies are born outside marriage. Abortion is a frequent and accepted procedure. A large number of young teenagers leave their homes and often end in pitiable conditions. To what proportions must these things grow for a society to start disintegrating?

A prosperous and stable society without a relatively healthy family system is unknown to human history and no workable alternative to the family system has yet been found".

There is no room for this sort of problems to crop up in a society where there are families that live according to Buddhist ethical norms. It is with this understanding that the Buddha presented ways and means of maintaining stability in family life.

## VI. THE IDEAL SOCIETY

### 2.43

If the Noble Eightfold Path is open to the laity or in other words, if one can follow the path while leading a lay life, and if there are some who have attained Arhantship while remaining lay, then why should one renounce household life and enter into recluseship? The purpose and aim of recluseship is well enunciated in many Suttas, among which the *Samaññaphala* stands very prominent. In those Suttas it is made quite clear that household life is renounced because it becomes an obstacle to the pursuit of noble life (*brahma-cariya*) in its complete purity.<sup>138</sup> Practise of *brahmacariya* is quite necessary for quicker realization of Nibbana, or emancipation. When other religionists inquire as to why this noble life is led as a follower of the Buddha, the Buddha advised the disciple to reply this question pinpointing the purpose.<sup>139</sup> The points highlighted by the Buddha in his advice are (1) for the destruction of attachment (*raga*) (2) for the destruction of fetters (*samyojana*) (3) for the complete destruction of latent defilements (*anusaya*) (4) for the full comprehension of the path (*addhana*)

(5) for the destruction of cankers (*asara*) (6) for the realization of the fruit of freedom through knowledge (*vijja - vimutti-phala*) (7) for knowing and seeing (*ñāna - dassana*) (8) for the attainment of emancipation without any clinging (*anupada*) (9) for the comprehension of dukkha.<sup>140</sup> The *Cullavedalla Sutta*<sup>141</sup> says that '*brahmacariya*' has Nibbana as its goal. From all this it is seen that one enters into recluseship in order to realize emancipation without any delay.

### 2.44

The Bhikkhu community is an organization with a primary aim and it is guided by the code of discipline embodied in the *Vinaya Pitaka*. There are many characteristics that make it different from the lay society, and these special characteristics could be seen from the ten objects which the bhikkhus are expected to reflect on constantly and from the two-hundred and twenty rules constituting the *patimokkha*. In the present study any examination of the community of bhikkhus become relevant only if it has any meaningful connection with the lay economic development. Therefore, primarily it has to be found out whether these vinaya rules become meaningful in regulating lay institutions. This has to be done because there are scholars who opine that emancipation is limited to the community of monks, and that the vinaya rules have no relevance to lay life.

### 2.45

The following remarks of Prof. W. S. Karunaratne<sup>142</sup> deserves attention in this connection.

"Although secular politics was left to the lay citizens themselves the Buddha illustrated the applicability of his political philosophy to lay life by founding the order of monks under almost laboratory conditions".

Another of his observations<sup>143</sup> relevant to the point is as follows:

"The Buddha taught the virtues of liberty and democracy and established an order of monks and nuns precisely on the basis of democratic and corporate principles. In so doing he undoubtedly expected also to indicate to the lay people the desirability of following such principles in the manner of organising their own institutions".

Prof. Nandasena Ratnapala's<sup>144</sup> views also support the above contentions. He argues that Buddhism provides a wealth of knowledge as regards the sociological progress of criminology, the causes leading to crime, as well as remedial measures for crime reduction. He says that the disciplinary code of the sangha based on the three fundamental principles of morality (*sila*) mental culture (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*pañña*) is adaptable to the lay society, and that the modern legalistic concept of 'mensrea' is embodied in the Buddhist concept of 'volition' (*cetana*) which forms the basis for distinguishing the ethical value of mental verbal and physical acts.

Did the Buddha himself think that Vinaya rules are adaptable to the lay society or is this an attempt at a modernistic interpretation of Buddhism? What exactly is the position reflected in the canon?

#### 2.46

In this context the Buddha's advice to monks pertaining to matters related to economics has to be specially considered. While it is the lay people who are engaged in production, the monks depend on the society for their basic requirements. The Dhammapada<sup>145</sup> explains how monks should obtain support from the laity.

"As a bee without harming the flower its colour or scent, flies away collecting only the honey even so should the sage wander in the village."

In the *Sigalovada Sutta*<sup>146</sup> the Buddha uses the same simile to explain how the laity should engage in production. Explaining how a monk should engage in consumption the Buddha in the

*Ariyavansa Sutta*<sup>147</sup> says that it should be done without resorting to a wrong course, without being bewildered, without committing any offence, seeing its evil consequences. Almost in an identical manner the Buddha lays down in the *Kamabhogi Sutta*<sup>148</sup> and also in the *Rasiya Sutta*<sup>149</sup> the attitude the laity should adopt with regard to consumption.

#### 2.47

There is further evidence in the Suttas on this matter. It is seen that while the Buddha represents the spiritual ideal, the Universal Monarch (*Cakkavatti Raja*) represents the secular idea. Prof. Trevor Ling<sup>150</sup> says that the two are so closely linked that they almost appear to be one and the same in different roles". Another writer<sup>151</sup> taking this idea a little further says that "the two personalities represented by the Buddha and the *Cakkavatti Raja* are a symbol expression of the two fundamental principles (spiritual and material respectively) referred to above". The *Pathama Cakkanuvattana Sutta*<sup>152</sup> of the *Anguttaranikaya* gives a list of five characteristics which are fundamentally common to both of them. These are *atthuññu*, *dhammaññu*, *Mattaññu*, *Kalaññu* and *Parisaññu*.

#### 2.48

Of these *mattaññu* means knowing the measure, knowing the limit. This is often mentioned in connection with food. In such contexts '*Bhojane mattaññuta*' means knowing the limit or measure of eating, and this is a virtue that is especially emphasized with regard to monks. The *Samaññaphala Sutta*<sup>153</sup> describes a monk who observes this virtue as a monk who takes one meal a day abstains from food at night as well as from taking food out of regular hours. Even a novice (*samanera*) is expected to observe this practice. However, there is no such restriction for the laity, though overeating is considered as being bad even for the lay people. It is said one who wisely reflecting partakes food should do so to dispel hunger, to avoid any discomfort that might arise and to obtain nourishment that is required to lead a disease free

life. It is well - known that the Buddha advised King Pasenadi Kosala to be mindful about his food habits.<sup>154</sup> The basic purpose of 'bhojane mattañña' is same as regard to monks and laity. However, as monks are devoted to follow the totally perfect noble life, they have to observe this practice more strictly than the lay people. Thus the fruitfulness of this practice has to be understood in the light of the different groups of people who undertake to follow it.<sup>155</sup> This is so with regard to the other four characteristics namely, **atthañña**, **dhammañña**, **Kalañña** and **parisañña**.

## 2.49

The five precepts (**panca sila**) are the regular virtues of the lay people. Even the four **Parajikas** are based on these.<sup>156</sup> The foregoing discussion leads to the conclusion that injunction proclaimed by the Buddha to monks are adaptable to suit the life of the lay people and that even the Buddha intended that these injunctions should be so adapted. It should also be borne in mind that as the purpose of monk life is to lead the noble life in its total purity the Buddha never expected the life of the lay people, who are given to enjoyment of pleasures to be exactly modelled according to the life of the monks. When Buddhist societies are examined it is seen that the lay people, depending on circumstances and times, exercising proper discretion have adopted these injunctions. It is seen that such assumptions as 'Buddhism is for the monks and not for the laity are mere futile statements made by those who are not quite familiar with canonical Buddhism.<sup>157</sup> All these lead to the inevitable conclusion that when studying the Buddhist economic philosophy it is imperative to study also the fundamental principles pertaining to the sangha community.

## 2.50

A lay person devotes himself to the practice of 'brahmacariya' in its complete purity only after making a firm resolve to realize Nibbana as quickly as possible.

Such a decision is taken voluntarily, with no external coercion. As soon as one begins to tread such a path, his external

characteristics internal virtues as well as his general conduct will make it clear that he is getting away from lay mode of life. The **Dasadhamma Sutta**<sup>158</sup> says that first among the factors that a monk should constantly reflect upon is that he has undergone a change in 'colour' (**vevanniyam**). This conveys a wide meaning. Externally, of course, it means a change in appearance such as shaving of the head, wearing yellow robes, using a bowl and so on. It means also entering into a casteless or classless state for "vanna" also means caste. Suttas such as **Paharada**<sup>159</sup> as well as **Vinaya Mahavagga**<sup>160</sup> show clearly the existence of such a casteless state in the sangha. There are no narrow divisions and distinctions bound on caste, birth clan, class and so on in the sangha community. The only consideration with sangha community is the spiritual seniority. Other than for a few exceptions such as those who were afflicted with certain kinds of diseases, wanted criminals, officials in the royal service, and such others who were not given admission, all others had equal opportunity in entering the order of monks.<sup>161</sup> A bhikkhu is not a beggar because he is not begging, but accepting if offered. He is not a priest for, he is no mediator between god and men. A bhikkhu is a noble person, a person worthy of honour and respect because of his noble conduct and spiritual advancement. He is not a proselytizer for, there is no proselytizing in Buddhism.<sup>162</sup>

## 2.51

It is seen that as soon as one renounces household life and enters recluseship he gives up his participation in activities related to production; gives up hoarding and consuming hoarded up things. He constantly remembers that he is dependant on others for his needs.<sup>163</sup> Due to his relation with the laity an enormous responsibility is cast upon him, and there are a number of ways in which he could discharge those responsibilities. One such way is to protect what is offered by the laity and make maximum use of it. The detailed clarification Ven. Ananda made to king Udena regarding the frugal use of robes by monks clearly brings out the method adopted by them in making use of their basic necessities.<sup>164</sup> They led such frugal lives that they were not expected to go in for

a new bowl till the old one gets damaged at five places.<sup>165</sup> The **Vattakkhanda** of the **Cullavagga**<sup>166</sup> explains how monks should protect their residences and objects of use such as beds, chairs, pillows, mattresses etc.

Another way in which a monk could discharge his responsibility towards the laity is by leading a contented, simple life which does not make him a burden on the laity. As pointed out in the **Mahagopala Sutta**<sup>167</sup> the monk should know the limits of his basic needs. Showing compassion is yet another way of serving the laity. While a Bhikkhu who has successfully completed his training should devote all his time to serve the laity in this manner, a trainee should devote whatever time that is available for the same purpose. A still better way to serve the laity is to strive with firm resolve and realize emancipation. The Vinaya rules are to help bhikkhu to achieve this aim.

Excommunication from monkhood takes place only if a monk is found guilty of any of the four Parajika offences. Though this is so, their code of discipline is an idealistic one. This becomes clear by examining one of the Parajika offences namely, killing of a human being. A monk becomes guilty of this offence only if he commits murder, supplies weapons to commit murder, praises murder or incite another to commit murder.<sup>168</sup> Yet there are numerous other precepts and rules which lay down that killing of even a small insect is an offence. Therefore, it is laid down that a fully ordained monk should not kill even an insect like an ant.<sup>169</sup> This precept is even extended to cover the destruction of plant life<sup>170</sup> for destruction of plant life is an act coming under **pacittiya**. A bhikkhu should always reflect on whether he is to incur any blame due to any moral lapse on his part, how he is spending his nights and days, has he obtained any special knowledge and vision, whether to hold any different attitude and so on.<sup>171</sup> All this is to make sure that a bhikkhu would not commit even a minor wrong.<sup>172</sup>

## 2.52

The establishment of some kind of a micro-society, in which there is equality and which is conflict free, within the conflict-

ridden macro society itself is the practical demonstration of the true meaning of democracy. The system of administration of the sangha, too was planned in such a way as to be in total harmony with the democratic principles. Hence R. K. Mukkerjee<sup>173</sup> observes that the Buddhist Sangha is in strict conformity with genuine democratic principles. However, Ken Jones<sup>174</sup> says that one has to be cautious when using this term 'democracy' in this context. It is seen that 'democracy' as it is understood today was not exactly put into practice in the sangha community. It is seen that the Buddha did not delegate the power of promulgating rules to any of his disciples. But he made the community of monks responsible for the protection and operation of all these rules. It is said that the Buddha took into consideration ten factors when he thought of setting up a code of discipline for the monks.<sup>175</sup> He at times taking into consideration the circumstances, public opinion and such other factors relaxed, tightened or changed certain rules. Thus one can see that there is a flexibility in these disciplinary rules. In fact the Buddha was willing to give his disciples the right to decide on any changes or adjustments, with regard to minor rules.<sup>176</sup>

The nature of the leadership in the community of monks too, demonstrates its democratic character. Addressing Ven. Ananda the Buddha declared that he does not think that it is he who leads the order or that the order is dependent on him.<sup>177</sup> The Buddha did not appoint a successor,<sup>178</sup> instead he advised the disciples to be a refuge unto themselves, to be an island unto themselves, without seeking external refuges.<sup>179</sup> When at Kosambi a group of monks began quarrelling among themselves the Buddha did not act like an autocrat, instead he acted like an understanding teacher.<sup>180</sup> Though he advised the monks to regard the Dhamma as the teacher after his death, he did not forget to caution them not to cling to Dhamma dogmatically<sup>181</sup>. The Vinaya rules were not promulgated according to his whims and fancies, but according to circumstances and events that necessitated their promulgation. The authority to perform all ecclesiastical acts was given to the community of sangha. Describing the order of monks Gokuldas De<sup>182</sup> says that 'it is an organization of bhikkhus by the bhikkhus for the bhikkhus.'

Prof. Trevor Ling<sup>183</sup> agrees with this and calls it a democratic organization. The Margues of Zatland<sup>184</sup> has been so impressed by the institution of the sangha that he says:

"In the assemblies of the Buddhists in India two thousand years and more ago are to be found the rudiments of our own parliamentary practice of the present day."

## 2.53

The **Mahavagga**<sup>185</sup> mentions three main modes of procedure in relation to ecclesiastical acts. They are (i) **Natti-kamma** (ii) **Natti dutiya kamma** and (iii) **Natti thutiya kamma**. All ecclesiastical acts are conducted after bringing up a resolution (**Natti**) before the assembly of monks. This resolution (**Natti**) is presented either once, twice or thrice and then the adoption of the resolution is announced. This presentation of the resolution thrice is seen in ecclesiastical acts pertaining to 'uposatha', **Kathina** and 'upasampada'. This is very much similar to the procedure adopted in modern parliaments in presenting bills. The presenting of the resolution once is similar to the first reading of a bill. The declaration of consent or dissent is similar to the preliminary round of voting. The presentation of the '**Natti**' for the second and third time is comparable to the second and third readings of a bill. The **Mahavagga** itself emphasises that any procedural error invalidate the whole process of the ecclesiastical act, just as it is the case with bills, wrongly presented in the parliament. Just as a draft of an act the text or the wording of the resolution should be in the accepted technical language and format. As pointed out by scholars like Gokuldas De<sup>186</sup> steps taken to prevent the majority opinion subjugating the minority opinion is also a distinctive democratic feature seen in the Vinaya. Similarly, when the majority view is unrighteous and wrong there is provision for the righteous and right view to prevail<sup>187</sup>.

As shown by both the **Samagama Sutta** and the **Chullavagga**<sup>188</sup> there are four kinds of 'disputes' known in Pali which require legal remedies for their settlements. These are (i) **Vivadadhikarana**

- disputes regarding the Dhamma and Vinaya (2) **Anuvada dhikarana** - disputes regarding the state of a monk's opinion, moral conduct etc. (3) **Apattadhikarana** - disputes regarding transgression of Vinaya rules and precepts etc. and (4) **Kiccadhikarana** disputes regarding procedure of ecclesiastical acts etc.,<sup>188</sup> There are also seven modes of settling these disputes and they are referred to as **adhikarana-samathas**: They are

- (1) **Sammukhavinaya** (by verdict in the presence of)
- (2) **Sativinaya** (by verdict of innocence)
- (3) **Amulhavinaya** (by verdict of insanity)
- (4) **Patiññatakarana** (carrying out of acknowledgement)
- (5) **Yebhuyyasika** (by the decision of majority)
- (6) **Tassapapiyyasika** (by an act of condemnation for specific depravity)
- (7) **Tinavattharaka** (by covering up with grass)<sup>189</sup>

When it is found that a dispute cannot be resolved by the assembly of monks it is referred to a 'select committee', and if that select committee, too fails to settle it, then the matter is once again referred to the general assembly which makes its decision on a majority vote. To conduct the voting a returning officer called '**salakagahapaka**' is appointed. The monk selected for this position has to be of unimpeachable character. A marked piece of wood called '**salaka**' was used as the ballot, and voting was done in three ways viz, open ballot, secret ballot and whispering in the ear. Except in cases where a monk is charged for a '**Parajika**' offence and found guilty, in other instances, a monk when found guilty can put forward a plea of mitigation requesting for pardon.

Obviously there are many democratic features in this legal procedure. For example, in this procedure the presence of the accused is a necessary requirement. He is given the opportunity to cross examine the accuser. An accused is deemed innocent till he admits his guilt. The plea of insanity is admitted. There is

provision for appealing for mitigation. There is also provision for appointing select committees to decide on subtle issues. When a unanimous verdict is not possible there is provision for voting, and the matter is decided on a majority vote. Voting by proxy too was allowed. The selection of a returning officer was done with meticulous care. The quorum was strictly observed. All ecclesiastical matters were put forward by way of formal resolution, which were precisely worded. It was not merely the letter but the spirit of vinaya that was really emphasised. A very marked feature in the whole procedure is the availability of provision for admission of guilt and pledging for good future behaviour. Though there is room for decision by majority vote, what is always strived at is unanimity. All these features very clearly demonstrate the democratic nature of the Vinaya.

## 2.54

The purpose of bhikkhu life is the eradication of craving and hence in the sangha instead of private ownership there is common ownership. As a monk is not involved in the process of production and as he is also completely free from household responsibilities his needs are also limited. As he is dependent on others for sustenance a system of common ownership is more practical. Both the Nikayas and the Vinaya deal about this common ownership in detail. King Bimbisara offered the Veluwana monastery for the whole community of monks.<sup>190</sup> And on this very first occasion of such an offering the Buddha admonished the king to offer it dedicating it to the whole community of monks.<sup>191</sup> The **Cullavagga**<sup>192</sup> also records how the Buddha advised the Millionaire (setthi) of Rajagaha who offered sixty dwellings for the monks to offer them to the whole community of monks of the four directions both of the present and future (**agatanagatassa catuddisassa sanghassa**). This was the procedure followed even in Sri Lanka in ancient times when cave dwellings were donated to monks. The monks cannot claim private ownership for the following five kinds of things. They are (i) parks or aramas used by monks for residence. (ii) Monasteries or viharas (iii) Beds, chairs,

pillows, bed-sheets etc., (iv) Items made of metal, and weapons, and (v) Mats, clay pots and pans, furniture etc.<sup>193</sup> Even the personal belongings such as robes and bowls of deceased monks once again became the common property of monks.<sup>194</sup>

The **Dakkhinavibhanga Sutta** which records the incident relating to the offering of a set of robes to the Buddha by Mahapajapati Gotami very clearly emphasize the significance of common ownership.<sup>195</sup> Addressing Ven. Ananda the Buddha emphatically says that he never extols a private offering as being more fruitful than an offering made to the community of monks<sup>196</sup>. Both the **Mahaparinibbana Sutta**<sup>197</sup> and the **Kosambiya Sutta**<sup>198</sup> says that even whatever that falls into one's bowl should be shared with others. The former sutta cites this sort of sharing with co-residents as a cause leading to progress while the latter sutta considers it as being conducive to understanding, peace and unity.

## 2.55

It is this common ownership that is now referred to as socialistic or communistic ownership. While R. C. Majumdar opines that the common ownership prevailing in the Sangha is based on the communist system, scholars like Oldenberg, Rhys Davids also endorse this opinion.<sup>199</sup> The **Aggañña Sutta** also hark back to an ancient period when people lived in harmony, enjoying common ownership. Therein it is also explained how with the evolution of private ownership, there took place moral degeneration, giving rise to other new social institutions. The Buddha does not admonish the people to revert back to the primitive stage of life; but he shows through the institution of the Sangha how to achieve spiritual progress and live happily in a society where common ownership operates. In fact by establishing the order of monks he clearly demonstrated the feasibility of forming such a social order. Prof. W. S. Karunaratne<sup>200</sup> who points out that the present day historians have not paid due attention to this fact, says:

“..... But hardly any one among the modern socialists or even among historians of socialism has been able to trace the

beginnings of socialism to its significant sources in the Tripitaka of the Buddhists. The elements of socialist thought and practice in the life and work of the Buddha sound remarkably modern even in our time. Let one refer to just two points which come within the purview of socialist economics. The **Cakkavattisihanada Suttanta** of the **Dighanikaya** contains an analysis by the Buddha of the causality of suffering in society. We are told here that poverty began to increase in society as a result of the non-production of economic goods among the proletarian masses. The second point I wish to refer to is that pertaining to public ownership which is found to a greater or lesser extent in every country in the modern world."

Many factors contributed to the successful operation of common ownership in the community of monks. Some of these factors are: (i) The monk is free from all family encumbrances (ii) He does not participate in production (iii) He is sound by the common aim of following the noble life (brahmachariya) for the purpose of ending craving (iv) He opts to follow recluship voluntarily (v) He has the option of giving up recluship if he desires and (vi) He is being governed by a perfect democratic system. This common ownership, which was introduced for the first time by the Buddha, brought about a complete institutional revolution. As it happened to be also an inner mental revolution it, in spite of certain shortcomings, survives even today.

## 2.56

The fact that the monks are always mindful of their dependence on society for their maintenance itself makes clear how responsible the laity is to provide sustenance for monks. The primary obligation of this lay - clergy relationship is based on the feeling of gratitude shown by monks to the lay for their economic support. This is why it is often admonished that monks should show their gratitude to the lay by preaching the doctrine.<sup>201</sup> The **Sigalovada Sutta** also emphasizes these mutual obligations. It is quite clear that the maintenance of monks is a responsibility

incumbent upon the laity. To the laity monk is not a mediator between God and men, but a field of merit wherein he could sow the seeds of merit. The journey towards emancipation is an arduous one and merit becomes useful to lessen the hardships one encounters in this journey. The monk through his noble conduct and spiritual progress provides the laity an opportunity to gather merit. Besides, the monk functions as a guide to them, showing the path to emancipation. Hence laity is necessarily obliged to render support to monks. Suttas such as the **Pattakamma**, **Samicipatipada** also emphasize these aspects. The advice given by the Buddha to his first sixty disciples before they were dispatched to preach the Dhamma shows how concerned the Buddha was about working for the well being of the masses. The **Asamayasamaya Sutta** mentions periods of famine, riots and so on as periods unsuitable for spiritual pursuit. Even when promulgating Vinaya rules the Buddha displayed much concern about mutual relations between clergy and the laity. Thus, two of the reasons for promulgating Vinaya rules are (i) to rouse faith in those who have no faith and (2) to increase the faith of those who already have faith.

Even when selecting a site for a monastery, consideration was given to the fact whether the place is easily accessible to people. Their close mutual dependence is seen also from the fact that while monks have been penalized for their misconduct towards the laity, certain punishments were imposed on the laity for ill-treating monks. The legal action in Vinaya known as the "Tinavattharaka - one of the seven methods of setting disputes (**adhikarana samatha**) - is clear evidence to show how amicable settlements were reached when issues affecting the cordial relations between the sangha and the laity were adjudicated. The **Candupama Sutta**<sup>202</sup> says a monk should wander about in the village just like the moon, showering compassion equally on all. Both the **Anukampaka Sutta**<sup>202</sup> and **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>204</sup> enumerate the ways in which their mutual obligations should be discharged. The **Gihisamicipatipada Sutta**, too, lists such obligations. One of the most important Suttas that explain this harmonious mutual relations is the **Bahukara Sutta**<sup>205</sup> of the **Itivuttaka**. Therein it is said, "Monks, thus this

noble life (brahmacariya) is led depending mutually on each other for the complete ending of suffering."

## VII. BUDDHIST POLITICAL THOUGHT

### 2.57

It has been pointed out by scholars that it is mainly through the economic and political affairs of the people that the social ethic of a given religion could be put into practical application.<sup>206</sup> In all modern societies too whether capitalist or socialist, economics and politics are closely linked together. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the Buddhist political thought when inquiring into the Buddhist economic philosophy. This necessity is still more felt because of certain observations made by some modern scholars regarding Buddhist political thought. One such observation is by Winston L. King<sup>207</sup> who says that Buddhism is quite indifferent to politics and that it accepted the prevailing monarchical system without an attempt to bring about any change. He is also of the view that whatever political thoughts that are presented are not found in the Suttas, but in the Jatakas which are really non-Buddhist tales, subsequently adapted by the Buddhists. Max Weber's<sup>208</sup> view is that Buddhism is not only unpolitical but also antipolitical.

### 2.58

It is a fact that in the **Samññaphala Sutta**<sup>209</sup> the Buddha advises monks not to indulge in talks involving politics. However, if one happens to read the **Rajja Sutta**<sup>210</sup> where the Buddha gives thought to the question whether it is possible to rule a country without resorting to cruelty, punishment and tyranny one might begin to doubt whether Buddhism is unpolitical and antipolitical; or even whether the Buddha did not consider the possibility of bringing about a change in the prevailing system.<sup>211</sup> In this regard it is worthy to consider Prof. W. S. Karunaatne's<sup>212</sup> observation,

"..... The Buddha was not merely a philosopher and religious teacher in the narrower sense, but that he was one

who also made original and positive contributions to the history of political philosophy".

Ven. Prof. K. Ariyasena<sup>213</sup> says that a distinctive feature in Buddhism is seen in its attempt to relate politics with the economy of a country.

### 2.59

In the time of the Buddha there existed two types of Governments namely monarchical and republican or oligarchical.<sup>214</sup> There is constant reference to these in the Tripitaka. The **Mahaparinibbana Sutta**<sup>215</sup> refers to the republican system of the Vajjis and also discusses about the 'seven conditions of progress' (**satta-aparihaniya dhamma**) Similarly, such other Suttas as the **Cakkavattisihanada**, **Kutadanta** and **Mahasudassana** refer to ideal Kingship and the monarchical system.<sup>216</sup> The **Aggañña Sutta**<sup>217</sup> discusses the origin of kingship. There are many Suttas that explain the practices and norms that should be followed by a virtuous ruler.<sup>218</sup> These suttas discuss also matters pertaining to the relation between the economy and the system of Government. Early Buddhist canonical texts refer also to such issues as ethics, punishment, environmental protection, administration of justice in so far as they are related to political administration. The **Jatakas**<sup>221</sup> make reference to ten norms a king has to follow as well as the right of the people to expel Kings who are not suitable.<sup>220</sup> G.S.P. Misra<sup>221</sup> shows that the Nikayas as well as the Jatakas contain lot of references related to virtues that Kings should possess.

### 2.60

The **Mahaparinibbana Sutta**<sup>222</sup> records that it is the Buddha who enunciated the seven conditions of progress to Vajjis when he was sojourning at a shrine called Sarandada. With reference to the invincibility of the Vajjis the Buddha said that as long as they observed these seven conditions of progress one could expect only their success and not their decline. Unity, democracy, justice, impartiality, rule of law, respect for and obedience to elders and

religious men, observance<sup>214</sup> of customs and religious practices are some of the main features that are embodied in these seven conditions of progress.

## 2.61

The duties of the ideal king namely, the Cakkavatti Raja (Universal Monarch) are explained in the **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta**. Therein both the internal and external policies of such an ideal ruler are discussed. The internal policy is detailed under the ten cakkavatti norms. The fundamental features of these norms are (i) protection and maintenance of all, including birds and beasts in the Kingdom. (2) eradication of all forms of corruption (3) securing economic stability and progress, and (4) sustaining men.<sup>223</sup> The main features of the external or foreign policy consist of promotion of the observance of the five precepts and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.<sup>224</sup>

## 2.62

This Sutta emphasizes righteousness (**Dhamma**) as the corner stone of a cakkavatti-rulership. Even **Dhammaraja Sutta**<sup>225</sup> points out that '**Dhamma**' is the lord or the ruler of even a **cakkavatti-raja**. Explaining what is meant by '**Dhamma**' in this context Prof. K.N. Jayatilleke<sup>226</sup> says"

"This is not to be interpreted to mean that Dhamma is some sort of mysterious entity but that it is only to the extent to which states conform with Dhamma in their internal and foreign policy that man can achieve his legitimate aspirations for peace, prosperity and happiness".

The practice of seven conditions of progress (**sattva aparihaniya dhamma**), the ten norms to be followed by a Universal monarch (**dasa-cakkavatti-vata**) the ten duties of a King (**dasaraja-dhamma**), the four ways of showing hospitality (**sangahavatthu**), abstention from the four biases (**agati**) are included in this concept of Dhamma.<sup>227</sup> The **Tesakuna Jataka**<sup>228</sup> also contains a detailed account on governance. Thus as the canonical teachings have clearly

explained what this '**Dhamma**' is, there is no necessity to treat it as a mysterious entity.

The **Aggañña Sutta** gives a causal explanation of the origin of Kingship, rejecting the view that it is of divine origin. Besides, this Sutta also explains how Kingship gradually underwent a process of evolution, and also how the original protector of paddy fields, later came to be known as the King or **raja**. Ven. Prof. K. Ariyasena<sup>229</sup> very lucidly explains this process. The **Aggañña Sutta** says that the Kingship was conferred by public consent and this is corroborated by the **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta**<sup>230</sup>, which clearly mentions that Kingship is not a paternal legacy. Prof. Kalupahana<sup>231</sup> points out that this fact further strengthens the concept of social contract. In obtaining the Kingship as well as in accepting and carrying out administration it is the will of the people that plays a pivotal role. The **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta**<sup>232</sup> clearly describes the dire consequences that befall upon a country that is being ruled by an autocratic King. Such a country declines economically, causing numerous problems and corruption. As he does not quite well adhere to the good advice he receives, the country further degenerates and for this he becomes guilty. The **Kutadanta Sutta**<sup>233</sup> stresses the fact that a just ruler should primarily be concerned not about his own well being but almost the well being of the subjects. It also shows how important it is to obtain public consent when implementing programmes affecting<sup>234</sup> them.

This is specially so with regard to matters pertaining to the economy of the subjects, as for example levying taxes. Similarly, this Sutta condemns all attempts at self-aggrandisement by the rulers.<sup>235</sup> The **Mahasudassana Sutta**<sup>(236)</sup> holds that the relationship between the ruler and the subjects should be similar to the parent-child relationship.

## 2.63

Several Suttas explain how even nature turns out to be adverse as a result of bad governance. This fact is very clearly explained in the **Adhammika Sutta** of the **Anguttaranikaya** <sup>(237)</sup>. This Sutta

illustrates how, when the ruler is corrupt, different strata of society gets corrupted, and how nature is affected by this process of corruption, which in turn adversely affects the people. The modern societies have had enough such experiences, and therefore, hardly need detailed explanations.

## 2.64

The relation between politics and ethics has been well explained in both the **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta** and the **Kutadanta Sutta**. The former describes how unrest and consequent terrorism arise due to misgovernment of a ruler who does not pay enough attention to the people's welfare. The latter shows its contrary by depicting a society that becomes peaceful and affluent due to good government of a ruler who provides economic security to the people. The King is not considered as a mere ruler. On the one hand he should abide by the advice of the wise and carry out policies for long lasting well being of his subjects, on the other he also should be capable of advising the people. In fact it is the duty of a ruler to educate the subjects.<sup>238</sup> In the present this could be done through education, and then the provision of education to the people becomes the responsibility of the state. The texts also make it clear the system of education should not be limited to imparting only academic and professional skills, but should also be geared to the promotion of moral and ethical knowledge. It appears that the main aim of education should be not the teaching of a particular religious belief, but the moulding of a good citizen. This, in other words, means it should be aimed at creating a society where at least there would be safety of life, of private property, of family life, proper and unhindered communication and also where life could be led properly without falling into intoxication and going stray.<sup>239</sup>

## 2.65

Though two forms of governments are referred to by the Buddha namely, the monarchical and the republican, scholars have

shown that the Buddha did not consider one as being superior to the other.<sup>240</sup> Though some believe that the Sangha community is modelled on the republican system, there is no conclusive proof of this.<sup>241</sup> When describing the republican system of government the historians base their views on conditions that prevailed in the community of monks and assume them to be features of republican states. But the **Maha parinibbana Sutta**<sup>242</sup> itself makes it clear that the Vajjis adjusted their system of government according to the advice given by the Buddha himself. Just as one could argue that the Buddha modelled his community of Sangha on the republican system, one could also argue to the contrary that it was formed on the basis of the cakkavatti system of government. Some others could even hold that according to Buddhism the ideal form of government would be a benevolent democracy. But all are mere hypothetical propositions, any not conclusive proof of the Buddha's view. As shown by some writers Buddhism is not interested in protecting any particular form of government.<sup>243</sup> The institution of Sangha consists of most distinctive features of both democratic as well as socialistic systems. While he himself was building the Sangha institution the Buddha allowed the lay people to mould their own institutions. Buddhism approves any such institution as long as it does not go against righteousness. It is not the form that mattered, but how the institution functioned. Any institution becomes either good or bad depending on the ethical quality of concepts and attitudes of those who operate such an institution.

## 2.66

It is well known that the Buddha closely associated such monarchs as Pasendi Kosala and Bimbisara. But did the Buddha try to protect their monarchical forms of government by encouraging people to submit to their authority, whether it was just or not? It is true that the Buddha did not ever come into conflict with Kings, that he advised the bhikkhus to abide by the laws of the Kings. At times the Buddha acceded to the requests of kings and promulgated particular Vinaya rules accordingly. Thus he

prohibited the ordination of officers in royal service. Taking these instances as evidence some even suggest that the Buddha was more favourable towards the monarchical system.<sup>244</sup>

It was shown above that the institution of the Sangha was formed to provide an opportunity to realize emancipation as quickly as possible, without any hindrance, and also to give an opportunity for the literated individuals to devote all their time for selfless service for others. If these objectives are to be attained there should not be any conflict with the rulers, and this is why Vinaya was formulated in conformity with the laws of the state. However, the Buddha, while leaving the responsibility of having a government of their own choice in the hands of the laity, also advised them regarding the attitude and response they should show to governments and rulers. The **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta** very clearly points out that it is the duty of the state to provide economic stability. When the ruler neglects this primary duty of his, then, inevitably there takes place moral degeneration, disruption of peace leading to conflict, unrest and fear, finally resulting in armed insurrection. Even the **Kutadanta Sutta** is very emphatic on this point. It was also shown how even nature gets affected by the corruption of rulers. Prof. K. N. Jayatilake clearly shows that Buddhism accepted the right of the people to drive out the rulers who are misfits.<sup>245</sup>

### Chapter 3

## BUDDHIST ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY: THE INDIVIDUAL BASED ECONOMY

### I. RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

#### 3.1

This fifth item in the Noble Eightfold path means the right way of earning one's living. It also brings out the Buddhist economic system. Schumacher<sup>(1)</sup> is one of the Western economists who understood this fact and hence he writes:

"Right Livelihood is one of the requirements of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path. It is clear, therefore, that there must be such a thing as Buddhist Economics."

V. P. Varma<sup>(2)</sup> who makes an in-depth study of Buddhist Ethics observes:

"Although according to the scheme of the eightfold path, the concept of samyak ajiva is a norm for the ascetic seeking the goal of emancipation, still it is possible to extend the sphere of its operation....."

Then Varma goes on to discuss about the economic aspect of an individual's life. As he admits that the Noble Eightfold Path is valid equally for both the clergy and the laity, Varma does not hesitate to identify 'Samma ajiva', and Buddhist economic philosophy.<sup>(3)</sup> Prof. Jotiya Dhirasekara<sup>(4)</sup> shows how the Buddha explains, in the **Samanamandika Sutta**, purity of livelihood as an aspect of sila. In this Sutta the Buddha says that wholesome verbal and physical

deeds as well as purity of livelihood are included in morality.<sup>(9)</sup> "Ajiva parisuddha" or purity of livelihood denotes use of wholesome verbal and physical actions as means of livelihood, and this is same as right livelihood of the Noble Eightfold Path. Even the **Andha** (Dvicakkhu) **Sutta** of the **Anguttaranikaya** makes it clear that right speech and right action constitute right livelihood. Sila, the first item in the threefold training into which the Noble Eightfold Path is categorized, also constitute of right verbal and right physical action. Thus it is seen that Buddhist Economics is closely linked to the ethics, and it is its most distinctive feature.

### 3.2

In the last mentioned **Sutta**<sup>(7)</sup> the person with two eyes is described as one having 'noble thoughts', 'clarity of mind' and also one who possesses wealth acquired through effort and righteousness. As **Samanamandika Sutta**<sup>(8)</sup> explains 'Sila' as being caused by thoughts devoid of craving, hatred and confusion, it is possible to consider 'noble thoughts' (**settha sankappa**) referred to in the **Andha Sutta** as also denoting thoughts devoid of these three defilements. 'Samma Sankappa' or Right Thoughts the second item in the Noble Eightfold Path, consists of thoughts free from sensuous desires (**nekkhamma**) ill-will (**vyapada**) and cruelty<sup>(9)</sup> (**avihimsa**). It is seen that 'nekkhamma' denotes also absence of craving; and **avyapada** and 'avihimsa' denotes absence of hatred. Absence of confusion is a characteristic common to both these aspects. Thus the 'noble thoughts' of a person who possesses two eyes is the same as 'samma sankappa' in the Noble Eightfold Path. Clarity of mind or absence of doubt is the other quality of a two eyed person, and this is same as 'Samma ditthi' in the Noble Eightfold Path. According to the **Mahacattarisaka Sutta**,<sup>(10)</sup> **samma ditthi** precedes **samma sankappa**, and thus it is seen that 'right livelihood' is based on **samma ditthi** and **samma sankappa**; this is the philosophy that regulates Buddhist Economy.

Wisdom is endowed with such noble qualities as charity, friendliness and compassion.<sup>(11)</sup> Herein it is worth noting the observations made by Ven. Piyadassi<sup>(12)</sup> on **Samanmandika Sutta**.

He says:

"Words and acts are thoughts manifested. In Buddhism both motive and effect should be taken into consideration. However, good the motive may be, if the effect is not going to be healthy, we should refrain from such misguided words and deeds."

### 3.3

It is Right View (**samma ditthi**) which precedes Right Livelihood (**samma ajiva**) that enables one to distinguish right livelihood from wrong livelihood (**miccha ajiva**).<sup>(13)</sup> From what has been discussed so far it is seen that one of the criterions on which good and bad are distinguished is intention (**cetana**). Therefore, any virtuous mode of living not motivated by craving, hatred or confusion comes under right living. Wealth could be earned righteously only through such a mode of living.

The texts presents a number of other criteria to distinguish good from bad. As pointed out earlier, the **Nibbedhika pariyaya sutta**<sup>(14)</sup> puts forward intention (**cetana**) as the criterion. The **dhammapada**<sup>(15)</sup> mentions fruit or the effect of a deed as the criterion of deciding its ethical quality. This does not mean that one has to wait until the fruition of a deed to decide whether the deed is good or bad. The criterion presented in the **Ambalatthika Rahulovada Sutta**<sup>(16)</sup> which considers the individual and society as a single unit is quite popular with writers dealing with ethics and morality. According to this **Sutta** whatever deed that is done for the well being of oneself and others is good and the opposite kind of deed is bad. the 'attapanayika' criterion (i. e., taking oneself as the standard) is presented in the **Veludvara Sutta**.<sup>(17)</sup>

The **Dhammapada**<sup>(18)</sup> also presents the same criterion. According to the **Metta Sutta**<sup>(19)</sup> a good action is that which

receives the praise of the wise. The **Anguttaranikaya** <sup>(20)</sup> presents conscience (**attadhipateyya**), public opinion (**lokadhipateyya**) and compliance with the Dhamma (**dhammadhipateyya**) as three 'authorities' (**Adhipateyya**) that help to distinguish good from bad.

### 3.4

At present, generally three main factors are taken into consideration when discussing about economics. These are production of goods and services, consumption and distribution. It is physical action and numerous kinds of communications that are used in production consumption and distribution. Other than certain legal restrictions, there are hardly any other regulative forces in the modern materialistic economy to guide and direct these economic activities. Primarily, Buddhism holds the view that all these activities should be righteous and hence, it is essential that the individual should be guided by 'right thoughts'. This really is a distinctive feature in Buddhist economic activities.

Now a question arises as to whether the Buddha, while discussing matters related to spirituality, offered advice pertaining to economic matters? As already shown, the Buddha, in fact, did give such advice. There are many suttas, which either wittingly or unwittingly some scholars have failed to take notice of, that deal with matters related to economic affairs. The **Kamabhogi** <sup>16</sup> of the **Anguttara nikaya**, the **Rasiya Sutta** of the **Samyutta nikaya** are just two of them. <sup>(21)</sup> Commenting on the latter Tachibana <sup>(22)</sup> says that the Buddha's ideal in accumulating and distributing wealth is found in it. However, it is seen that this Sutta contains something more than this for, it deals not only with the above two aspects, but also with enjoyment or consumption as well as the philosophy behind it. Even the **Kamabhogi Sutta** <sup>(23)</sup> emphasises these aspects.

Thus in the **Rasiya Sutta** <sup>(24)</sup> the Buddha says a lay individual who is given to enjoyment of pleasures becomes laudable if he

- (1) earns wealth righteously,
- (2) pleases himself and makes himself happy,

- (3) divides his wealth properly and utilizes it also for meritorious purposes, and
- (4) enjoys it without falling into a wrong course, without getting infatuated, without incurring guilt knowing its evil consequences and having knowledge regarding escape therefrom. <sup>(25)</sup>

The **Kambhogi Sutta** says that an individual endowed with these qualities is the highest, superior, noblest and most excellent. Thus, undoubtedly those four aspects are of vital importance with regard to the Buddhist economic philosophy.

## II. PRODUCTION: ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH THROUGH RIGHTEOUS AND SCRUPULOUS MEANS

### (A) HOUSEHOLD ETHICS AND PRODUCTION

#### 3.5

Buddhism accepts that accumulation of wealth should be through righteous and non-violent means. The two terms used to describe how it should be done namely, '**dhammena**' (righteously) '**asahasena**' (nonviolently) could be co-terminous. As pointed out in the **Pattakamma Sutta** <sup>(26)</sup> first among the four pleasant and desirable factors in the world is accumulation of wealth righteously, and in this context, too, the importance of engaging in production in a righteous manner is thus emphasised. The **Dhammapada** <sup>(27)</sup> says that a righteous person is he who does no wrong either for his own sake or for the sake of another, or does no wrong through the desire for one's wealth or even a kingdom. It has already been shown above that righteous livelihood is to make one's livelihood in a virtuous manner. Hence it is seen becoming virtuous is one way of being righteous in accumulating wealth.

#### 3.6

The Buddha, replying to a query made by Mahanama, the Sakyan, says it is by the observation of five precepts that one

becomes virtuous.<sup>(28)</sup> Morality, right speech and right action all mean abstaining from evil physical and verbal activities. The fourth precept namely, abstention from lying includes also harsh speech, slandering and idle talk. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that occupations that are in accordance with the five precepts are righteous and those that do not conform to the five precepts are unrighteous.

Even the **Veludvara Sutta**<sup>(29)</sup> cites verbal and physical control as factors that should be controlled by a lay person for his happiness here and hereafter. What the Buddha refers to as 'dhammacariya' and Samacariya' in the **Saleyyaka Sutta**<sup>(30)</sup> is the practice of ten meritorious actions. Herein mental restraint means abstention from the three evils namely, wanton greed, ill-will and wrong view and the cultivation of their opposites. Abstention from wanton greed and ill-will has already been discussed under Right Thought (**samma sankappa**). Similarly, what wrong view (**miccha ditthi**) is has been explained in the discussion pertaining to Right view (**samma ditthi**). It was shown that it is this same right view that is referred to as wisdom (**pañña**) which is considered the foundation of Buddhist economic philosophy.

### 3.7

The initial requirement for one to become virtuous is to abstain from killing. Killing and other violent acts are basically motivated by thoughts of ill-will (**vyapada**), the opposite of which is non-violence (**avihimsa**), that means friendliness. Schumacher<sup>(31)</sup> has shown that non-violence is the fundamental characteristic of Buddhist economics. Prof. Wijesekara<sup>(32)</sup> is of opinion that friendliness or universal love, is the basis of all social Buddhist ethics. Hence it is important to consider how abstention from killing, cultivation of non-violence and friendliness regulate Buddhist economic system. The **Samaññaphala Sutta**<sup>(33)</sup> and the **Saleyyaka Sutta**<sup>(34)</sup> deal with the first precept namely, abstention from killing, focussing special attention on its applicability to the clergy and the laity. Both these Suttas give an identical

explanation which runs as "Having given up destruction of life, abstain from destruction of life, he lives casting aside the sticks (i. e. giving up punishment) and weapons ashamed of (harmful conduct) showing kindness, with compassion towards all beings."

From this it is clear that this precept has both a negative and a positive aspect, both of which are of equal importance with regard to Buddhist economics. Addressing the lay devotee called Dhammika the Buddha explained abstention from killing as; (a) personally abstaining from such acts (b) abstaining from causing others to do such acts, and (c) abstaining from approving such acts.<sup>(35)</sup> The **Veludvara sutta** which presents the 'Self-standard' (**attupanayika**) as the criterion in deciding good and bad gives a lucid explanation regarding observation of this precept. Herein the Buddha explains how one should consider that just as one abhors death, but desires to live, abhors suffering but yearns for happiness, dislikes if another tries to harm one's life, similarly others too, dislike and abhor unhappiness, or physical harm. Understanding that just as one wants happiness safety of life and so on, or he should refrain from doing anything to others what one does not want others to do to oneself. The Sutta points out how effectively this, criterion of 'self-standard' could be employed to restrain one's behaviour and avoid doing any kind of evil<sup>(61)</sup>

### 3.8

Herein the Buddha has explained the precept dealing with abstention from killing focussing attention on two aspects namely, its value component and factual component. Its value component is reflected in the observation that one should not taking oneself as the example, kill or harm others. Why should one do so? It is because one should realize that just as he is, all beings are frightened of punishment, all beings desire to live and dislike to die, all beings desire happiness and dislike unhappiness. The **Dhammapada**<sup>37</sup> also emphasises these two aspects. Prof. Gunapala Dharmasiri makes the following observation on this point.

"What this analysis shows is that Buddhism does not regard 'goodness' as a moral absolute. In contemporary terminology

Buddhism propounds a prescriptive theory of ethics. A Buddhist ethical proposition can be analysed into two parts: a factual component and a value component. The factual component is extremely important because the Buddha strongly believed that 'ought' did not imply 'can'. In other words we must not say we ought to do something unless it is something we 'can' do. Therefore, 'ought' should be based on reality or facts. This is why the factual component becomes important. The value component should be based on factual component. The meaning and validity of the value component, depends on the truth of the factual component. If the factual component is false then the value component becomes meaningless and invalid<sup>(38)</sup>

### 3.9

The realities of the world themselves make it clear that this doctrine of non-violence is a meaningful fundamental ethical principal. The friendliness and compassion which regulate the positive aspect of this fundamental principle are by themselves limitless or boundless factors. Hence it is seen that this principle should be observed irrespective of all narrow divisions among men or even without making any differentiation between man and beast. All beings should be considered on an equal footing. It has already been pointed out that Buddhism considers the 'society' in a very wide sense.<sup>(39)</sup> Therefore, a question that arises naturally is, whether certain activities in the economic sphere is suitable for the Buddhists? A Buddhist is not free to accept each and every occupation or do any industry or business approved and accepted in the economic system. Certain restrictions are placed on a Buddhist by the observation of friendliness and non-violence. The Buddha, after considering the prevailing economic system as well as the available job avenues, presented certain occupations as suitable for Buddhists. Some of these occupations are agriculture, trade, cattle breeding, security service, royal service and some other crafts.<sup>(40)</sup>

### 3.10

In the **Vyagghapajja Sutta** agriculture leads the list of suitable occupations. The Buddha admits that all beings are dependent on food and this is an assertion that has a very deep meaning. As explained in the **Ahara Sutta**<sup>(41)</sup> nutrients are of four kinds namely, (1) material (**Kabalinkara-ahara**) (2) nutrients of contact (**phassa-ahara**) (3) nutrients of volition (**mano sancetana - ahara**) and (4) nutrients of consciousness (**viññana - ahara**).

The well known statement '**Sabbe Satta aharatthitika** (all beings are dependent on nutrients) clearly establishes the value of food. Even for a recluse who has renounced everything food forms the first of the four basic needs. The **Asamaya-samaya Sutta**<sup>(43)</sup> explains how difficult it is to engage in spiritual pursuit during periods of famine. A popular anecdote relates how the Buddha first provided food to a hungry listner, before he started preaching to him. All this point to the fact that food is important and, in India, where the staple food at that time was rice, agriculture was considered of great importance. Commenting on this Most Ven. Madihe Paññasiha Maha Nayaka Thero says that agriculture is an independent occupation which a Buddhist could follow without compromising his Buddhistic practice, and perhaps this may be the reason why the Buddha gave precedence to it over the other occupations.

### 3.11

However, in this connection it is important to note an observation made by Max Weber<sup>(41)</sup>, He says:

"Indeed, in the religions of India, and most consistently in the salvation religion of Buddhism the peasant is religiously suspect or actually proscribed because of **ahinsa**, the absolute prohibition against the taking the life of any living thing".

Again he<sup>46</sup> says:

"For according to Jewish ritual law, it was virtually impossible for a peasant to live a pious life just as in Buddhism and Hinduism."

As Weberian thought generally provides the theoretical basis for those who contend that Buddhism cannot contribute to economic progress, it is necessary to delve on the above observation. However, before embarking on this it is prudent to examine the place assigned to agriculture in Buddhism.

### 3.12

The **Kasibharadvaja Sutta** <sup>(47)</sup> of the **Suttanipata** records an incident where the Buddha explains to a Brahmin, who was engaged in agriculture, that the Buddha's own vocation is similar to that of a farmer. The **Paviveka Sutta** <sup>(48)</sup> of the **Anguttara nikaya** bears testimony to the Buddha's intimate knowledge on agriculture as well as to his attitude towards it. Perhaps this sutta provides the best evidence on this matter.

### 3.13

The **Accaika** <sup>(49)</sup> also of the **Anguttara nikaya** makes a comparison between certain essential features in the vocation of a monk and that of a farmer. It is shown that a diligent farmer ploughs the field well, furrows it, sows the seeds, provides water at the proper time and also lets out excess water at the proper time. Further this sutta hints at the farmer's patience, his systematic approach to his vocation, harmonious co-existence with nature and also at the stable nature of the farmer's life. <sup>(50)</sup>

### 3.14

The Buddha was a teacher who was born and who grew up amidst a community of farmers. Most of his disciples came from a similar background. His constant preaching tours were amidst vast stretching paddy fields. Therefore, it is not surprising to see him drawing similes, metaphors and other kinds of figures of speech, from agriculture to facilitate communication of his teaching. His

intimacy with agriculture made him name it as the best suited occupation for a lay follower of his. All this evidence not only make above cited Weber's remarks sound an empty prattle, but even reveal the sheer immaturity of his knowledge about Buddhism. It has to be remembered that Siddhartha's father as well as his paternal uncles had the "**odana**" (meaning rice) affixed to their names eg. **Suddha-odana**, **Amita-odana**. One cannot forget the fact that the Buddha laid down the rule that the robe should be stitched following the pattern of weirs in a paddy field. Now in spite of all this evidence to the contrary what made Weber make those observations?

There are certain precepts promulgated in the Vinaya with regard to the practise of non-violence. For example, there is a rule which says that a fully ordained monk should completely refrain from consciously depriving life of any sentient being, however small that being may be. Similarly, there is a rule to say that such a monk should abstain from destroying vegetation, the plant life. But it should be noted that these rules are for the monks who have renounced household life and have vowed to follow the noble religious life of a recluse. However, by mixing up the two vocations namely, that of a monk and that of a lay person some scholars arrive at hasty conclusions. This also is one of the reasons for Weber's observation. A monk loses his monkhood only if he commits any one of the four parajika offences. The first of these is homicide. The position of the laity is quite different from this. There had been lay people who had attained even the state of an **Anagamin** (non-returner). There were some who had realized Arahant hood while being lay. Sensual desire and ill-will still remain while a person is in **Sotapatti** and **Sakadagami** stages. These defilements are completely eradicated only through the path leading to the **Anagami** state. This shows that even a person who has attained either the **Sotapatti** or **Sakadagami** state could commit murder. The **Suttanipata** <sup>(51)</sup> says that if a **Sotapanna** were to commit an evil act either verbally, physically or mentally it would be impossible for him to hide it. The difference in this instance between an ordinary lay person and a noble individual who has

reached the **Sotpanna** or **Sakadagami** state is that the latter would not hide any of his evil deeds and hence he commits no evil deed that leads him to an evil state. According to the **Sandaka Sutta**,<sup>52</sup> it is only an arahant who will not commit an evil act consciously. Thus, the Buddhist position is that until one realized arahantship there is no possibility of being absolutely heedful in social life and, consequently avoid committing evil.

The **Sikkhapada Sutta**<sup>53</sup> of the **Anguttara nikaya** also says that individuals who have attained either of the three stages in the spiritual path namely, **Sotapatti**, **Sakadagami** or **Anagami** are yet in the process of cultivating **sila** (morality) and, hence it is possible that they may transgress some minor precept. If they do happen to transgress, then realizing their transgression, they again restrain themselves, and such lapses do not mar their nobleness. This is why Buddhism does not hold that final knowledge could be attained at the very beginning of the spiritual practice, and this is also why it puts forward a graduated course of training leading to emancipation. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that according to Buddhism it is not possible to expect total non-violence from the society.

It is also necessary at this point to get a clear view of the Buddhist standpoint about volition or will. There is a deep significance in the definition of **Kamma** as will or volition (**cetana**). If the mere action itself is considered important, then the Buddhist too, like Jains, will have to leave the society. But, on the contrary a Buddhist disciple very intelligently engages in all social activities. As Buddhism emphasises on health and hygiene, the **Vinaya**<sup>54</sup> lays stress on cleanliness. If Weber's view is further extended it would seem that not only a monk but even a lay person would not be able to clean even the cob-webs, for that would involve killing. These extremist and hasty conclusions are the results of inadequate understanding of the teaching. One has to discard these unfounded arguments, and conclude that agriculture as an occupation is quite in keeping with the Buddha's teaching and, that the Buddha presented it as the best occupation a lay person could engage in. It

provides the lay people with a stable economic background that is conducive to spiritual pursuit, besides, it is also seen that non-violence is an enlightened, pragmatic concept, and that it does not in any way lay down any unnecessary restrictions on day to day activities of a lay person.

### 3.15

The second item in the list of occupations enumerated in the **Vyagghapajja Sutta** is trade. It is not difficult to see that there has been a close link running through the community of traders, the Buddha and his dispensation. According to the **Mahavagga**<sup>55</sup> it was **Tapassu** and **Bhalluka**, two brother traders from the **Ukkala** region, that offered the first meal to the Buddha. There were such other millionaire businessmen like **Anathapindika** who were great patrons of the Buddha. Subsequently it is through the trade routes with the help of traders that Buddhism spread outside India. Thus, one comes across a mine of information regarding trade and tradesmen in the **Tripitaka**.

The **Pampanika Sutta**<sup>56</sup> of the **Anguttaranikaya** explains how a business could be carried out successfully if a person engages in it diligently and with utmost dedication. The **Vephulla Sutta**<sup>57</sup> of the same **Nikaya** enumerates three conditions that are conducive to success in trading. Hence the traders should be endowed with wisdom (**cakkhuma**), acumen (**vidhura**) and reliability (**nissaya**). Here wisdom means insightful knowledge a trader should display in buying items for sale, pricing them and making profit, without, however, exploiting the consumer. Business acumen is an essential factor for success. It is this factor that enables a trader to think in a far-sighted manner and select the most saleable items. The other factor is reliability (**nissaya**). When a business becomes economically stable the others begin to develop confidence in him considering that he is economically sound and that he would honour all financial commitments and so on. Thus reliability enables a tradesman to raise funds whenever it becomes necessary. When endowed with these qualities a tradesman becomes successful.<sup>58</sup>

### 3.16

The **Vanijja Sutta** is also important in this regard for, it lays down certain conditions pertaining to trade. According to this Sutta a Buddhist trader should not engage in trade involving weapons, living beings (slave trade) flesh, intoxicants and poisons. Very clearly these restrictions show the influence of non-violence and friendliness on trade.

### 3.17

It is obvious that the above kinds of trades are prohibited because they are harmful, as they are totally against the first and the fifth of the five precepts, namely abstention from killing and abstention from consuming intoxicants. Trade in weapons leads to destruction of life of humans as well as animals. Slave trade causes much physical and mental harm to victims of such trade. Trade in flesh is directly linked to killing of animals. Consumption of liquor causes mental derangement and physical debility and also harm to others. Therefore, these kinds of trade cannot be accommodated within the Buddhist life style.

Trade in weapons does not only mean trade in weapons of war. It includes all kinds of weapons, whether small or heavy, that brings about destruction of life. So is trade in poison. Abstention from trading in poison means not selling any kind of poison harmful to living beings, human beings as well as animals. Though it is presumed that slave trade as such is non-existent to-day, it is found that men and women, specially children are sold for various nefarious activities. Rearing of animals for flesh is a very common feature. A true Buddhist cannot engage in any of these kinds of trade. It is seen that most of the Sri Lankans who have been nurtured under the influence of Theravada Buddhist culture generally tend to avoid such occupations.

### 3.18

The third in the list of approved occupations is specifically named as cattle-breeding. Herdsmen and cattle are quite often referred to

in the texts in varying contexts. There are two such Suttas in the Majjhima nikaya entitled **Mahagopala** and **Culagopala**.<sup>60</sup>

The **Dhammapada** compares a much learned but a non-practising person to a herdsman cowherd who keep on counting others cattle.<sup>61</sup> The **Dhaniya Sutta** of the **Suttanipata** records a discussion that took place between the Buddha and the cowherd called Dhaniya, who finally along with his wife, embraced Buddhism.<sup>62</sup> Cattle were considered highest standard of wealth for, it is said that there is no wealth equal to cattle (**natthi go samitam dhanam**)<sup>63</sup> The cattle is considered the helpmate in activities carried out in community life. The **Suttanipata**<sup>64</sup> compares cattle to the parents, brothers, kin and best friends, the source of all healthful things. Therefore, cattle should not be slaughtered, it says. The farmer treated the cattle as his own progeny, never slaughtered them. The **Brahmanadhammika sutta**<sup>65</sup> says that it is after slaughter of cattle started that diseases began to increase. Rearing of animals for slaughter is an evil occupation indeed from the Buddhist point of view, and it is against the first of the five precepts. Any occupation that involves killing, destruction of beings cannot be considered righteous.

### 3.19

Archery (**issattha**) denotes some sort of occupation connected with provision of security and therefore, it does not involve any harm or destruction of life. A security service is essential, for any government.<sup>66</sup> The term 'rajaporisa' refers to government service. To-day, of course, government service is rather complex and consists of numerous kinds of occupations.

If there are any unrighteous occupations in the government service a Buddhist should refrain from engaging in such occupations. However, if the Government makes such services compulsory, if one has no choice, but to engage in them, then as it is done not on one's own free will one cannot be found fault with. A criterion employed to distinguish good from evil is one's intention (**cetana**), and in the above instance the required intention

is absent in the individual who is engaged in the evil occupation. Neither is the intention present, nor has he the freedom of choice. So he cannot be found fault with.

### 3.20

The sixth in the list of occupations is referred to as *sippannatara* meaning other crafts or skills. The *Mangala Sutta*<sup>67</sup> says that proficiency in crafts is a blessing. There were numerous arts and crafts that were fairly prevalent during the time of the Buddha. These craftsmen formed into guilds.<sup>68</sup> Under this category fell cottage industries, small scale as well as large scale industries. Apparently a Buddhist could engage in an industry that was not harmful. The *Jataka*<sup>69</sup> contains an admonition to the effect that one should learn and gain proficiency in any craft, whether it is low, middle or high. Yet, one should not engage in all these. When the appropriate time comes one should engage in one of these crafts.

### 3.21

Besides these occupations there were many others which were meant, not to produce goods but to provide services. Nursing, teaching, medicine, and law were some such occupations. These may also have been a part of Government Service at that time. But, now they are very wide spread and well organized professions. Hence in the present day context these professions too deserve attention and examination.

Based on the premise that an occupation should be compatible with household morality, it has so far been examined how an occupation could be categorized as righteous according to the concept of non-violence. Though this examination brought out the view that an individual should be led by friendliness and compassion which form the positive aspect of non-violence, this fact was not brought into forefront with regard to occupations so far considered. However, the economic or the professional emphasis of these Buddhist concepts could be easily understood through the services.

### 3.22

At present education is considered a fundamental human right and there is a well organized system of schools to impart education. A large number of government officials, a still larger number of teachers as well as a complex of buildings are used for this purpose. A fair proportion of the total government expenditure is incurred for the purpose of providing education. Considering education to be a fruitful sphere of investment, a particular area called 'Economics of Education' has now come into existence. Trained labour is properly evaluated. It is not possible to use the criteria used at present to evaluate the services rendered by those who served in these spheres in olden times. However, it should be remembered that even in the time of old there were sections of people who rendered some kind of similar service. In this context the social service activities of the monks is of much importance.

### 3.23

Though monks did not engage in teaching mundane arts and crafts, they contributed in a large measure to activate the minds of the people. Even to-day only a particular section of teachers are engaged in giving professional training. The others are generally engaged in teaching subjects conducive to mental development. When the *Sigalovada Sutta*<sup>70</sup> says that a teacher's duty is to make the pupil hear what he has not so far heard, and to make still clear what he has already heard, it shows how the monks of ancient times went about performing their duty as teachers. The advisory services and specialist services which are held in high esteem to-day were then performed by the monks. Even King Bimbisara obtained expert advice from the Buddha on matters of particular importance. Just as there is specialized service of psychologists and psychiatrists at present, in the ancient times the monks performed this function of bringing solace to those who suffered from various psychological problems. Texts show how the Buddha cured psychological problems of *Kisagotami* and *Patacara*. Though not equally proficient his disciples, too, attended on those who had psychological problems. Though there was no

monetary evaluation, these services fulfilled the needs of the day. The monks performed these services merely being motivated by compassion and friendliness. In these areas there exist immense job opportunities for Buddhists, who being motivated by the Four Sublime States (Brahmavihara), desire to engage in some kind of righteous profession. Just as the field of education, fields of medicine and health too are quite suitable for Buddhists to engage in. The Buddha himself has declared that serving the sick is as good as serving the Buddha.<sup>71</sup> If properly practised even legal profession could be classed in the same category. It is not necessary to go on adding to the list of righteous services, whatever profession or occupation that enables one to serve others as one's own friend, to help, out of compassion, those who are in distress, to serve those who are in need of service, these can be called righteous services.

## (B) Evaluation of labour

### 3.24

The **Anana Sutta**<sup>72</sup> explaining '**Atthi Sukha**' says that what it means is the happiness a householder enjoys when he knows that he has wealth obtained through effort, collected with the strength of his own hands, earned with his own sweat, rightous and righteously obtained. Thus it is seen that there are certain fundamental features, which make wealth fit to be called 'rightously acquired'. Those are (1) earned through effort (2) earned through the strength of one's own hands (3) earned through one's own sweat. These emphasise the necessity of labour, effort and the manner in which physical effort should be put forth. It is only when these fundamentals are observed when acquiring wealth, that wealth could be properly referred to as 'righteous' (**dhammika**) and (6) righteously acquired' (**dhamma laddha**). The term '**dhammika**' could also be taken as denoting the engagement in a righteous occupation selected in accordance with the Buddhist criteria of distinguishing, good from bad. Similarly, '**dhamma laddha**' could be interpreted to mean the performance of such an occupation

using righteous verbal and physical means. Buddhaghosa's explanation of these two terms in the **Manoratha-purani**<sup>73</sup> endorses this interpretation.

### 3.25

The **Andha Sutta** also says that only wealth earned through effort could be called 'righteous wealth'. However, Buddhism does not approve all sorts of effort directed at anything. It is not mere effort that Buddhism speaks of, it is effort directed towards some righteous occupation or profession. Explaining the 'blessing of effort (**utthana sampada**)', the **Vyagghapajja Sutta** says that if one is making his living by agriculture, trade, cattle breeding, archery, government service or some other type of craft, and if he is clever, not lazy, endowed with the ability to investigate the means and methods, able to organize the work properly, this is what is meant by the 'blessing of effort'<sup>74</sup> The above analysis focuses attention on five aspects namely, (1) proficiency or cleverness (2) not being lazy (3) proper investigation of means and methods (4) capability and (5) organizational ability.

### 3.26

In this context 'effort' seems to connote a special meaning. The Buddha who pointed out that suffering (**dukkha**) is the basic problem faced by man, declared that this suffering could be transcended through effort (**viriyena dukkham acceti**).<sup>75</sup> Therein the Buddha also said that whoever accomplishes any accepted type of occupation is said to earn his wealth through effort (**patirupakari dhurava utthata vindate dhanam**). Thus in the **Alavaka Sutta**<sup>76</sup> the Buddha declares that 'effort' is the vital quality that enables one to secure his well being, both mundane and supramundane. The **Mala sutta**<sup>77</sup> compares lack of effort to 'rust' in a householders life. In the **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>78</sup> the Buddha explains how people fall into decline through postponement of their work giving lame excuses such as it's too cold, 'it's too hot', 'too hungry' or 'too full up', or some times saying it's too early or it's too late' and so on. The **Itthadhamma Sutta**<sup>79</sup> mentions laziness

and lack of effort as obstacles for acquisition of wealth and their opposition as inducements for acquisition of wealth. It is seen that there is a special reason for this emphasis on effort. The reason for this is that while rejecting the beliefs that an individual's success is dependent on some external power and that it is due to no cause or condition, the Buddha upholds that it is causally conditioned. According to the Buddha not only the individual's success but the success of the society, too, is causally conditioned, hence his emphasis on effort is an important causal factor contributing to success.

### 3.27

As shown before (supra, 1.65) according to the **Titthayatana Sutta**<sup>80</sup> Buddhism does not entrust an individual's destiny to a creator God, for it accepts no such God; does not entrust "it to deeds done in a previous existence, for Buddhism admits free will and importance of present deeds. It does not accept that one's destiny is due to accidental happenings, for Buddhism accepts the causal genesis of everything. Therefore, it emphasises one's own responsibility for one's success, and the Tripitaka is replete with evidence for this. In a society which traditionally subjugated the individual to an external power, it was not an easy task for the Buddha to rouse self confidence and self-reliance in the individual. The Buddha's continuous attempt at this is seen from numerous statements to this effect found in early texts. The **Dhammapada**<sup>81</sup> contains the oft-quoted saying:

"Oneself indeed is one's saviour for what other saviour would there be? With oneself well controlled, one obtains a saviour difficult to find". And again in the same text one finds, "By oneself indeed is evil done, by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone, by one self indeed is one purified. Purity and impurity depend on oneself. No one purifies another".<sup>82</sup>

"Striving should be done by yourselves. The Tathagatas are only teachers."<sup>83</sup>

The **Attakara Sutta**<sup>84</sup> states that an individual is endowed with initiative (**arabbha-dhatu**), exertion (**nikkama-dhatu**), resistance (**Parakkama dhatu**) and persistence (**thamadhātu, thitidhatu**). Again in the **Anguttara nikaya**<sup>85</sup> the Buddha emphasises the fact that one can and one should bring about one's own progress.

### 3.28

When one rejects external reliance and accepts self-reliance and free will, then it becomes quite necessary to rely on personal effort. Buddhism holds in high esteem both mental and physical striving aimed at attaining well being both in this world and in the next. It is dignity of labour that is emphasised by praising wealth acquired through the strength of one's own hands and one's own sweat. Though dignity of labour is a very common concept at present, it is Buddhism that first emphasised its importance on a philosophical basis. Even at present physical labour is considered as being low, when compared with mental labour. This sort of attitude is specially found in societies which are caste-ridden, and have been subjected to colonial exploitation. However, such a distinction is not referred to in the Suttas. The Suttas record how the Buddha himself washed his robes, bathed with his own hands, the sick monks, went on alms rounds. The monks, while living in monasteries, had to toil hard to obtain their daily needs. They had to attend to numerous duties, to build pagodas repair and maintain them; they had to attend on their sick brethren; the pupil monks had to wait upon the sick-teacher monks. When performing these duties what mattered was not the mode of labour but the spending of labour in a fruitful manner.

### 3.29

We very well know about the physical labour put forth by a farmer and the mental labour put forth by a doctor. Besides these, Buddhism speaks of another kind of labour namely, spiritual labour. This denotes the effort put forth by one to purify oneself by eradicating defiling thoughts, causing to rise non-defiling thoughts and consequently elevating oneself to the state of a worthy one

(arahant). Mental factors such as confidence (**saddha**), wisdom (**pañña**) are vital aspects of this spiritual labour. Though these factors seem to give the impression that such labour is more concerned with personal gain, in fact one who reaches this state of worthiness employs both these factors - **Saddha and Pañña** - for the well being of others. Prof. Gunapala Dharmasiri's explanation of spiritual labour is worth noting. He says;

"Before we discuss acting or working for others we must first be clear about what is meant by 'work'. Ordinarily work is supposed to be physical. Buddhism accepts two types of work; physical and spiritual. For example, a farmer called Kasibharadvaja accused the Buddha of leading an idle life, not doing any physical work or labour. But the Buddha said that he also was engaged in labour and that perhaps he was engaged in a task more important and arduous than physical labour. Further he said that if it is necessary his work also could be easily put into the jargon of physical labour of a farmer. The Buddha answered, Brahmana: I also both plough and sow and having ploughed and sown I eat" Then the Brahmin retorts; "Thou professed to be a ploughman, yet we do not see thy ploughing" The Buddha answers: Faith is the seed, penance the rain, understanding my yoke and plough, modesty the pole of the plough, mind the tie, thoughtfulness my ploughshare and goad. Exertion is my beast of burden, carrying me to Nibbana. He goes without turning back to the place where having gone one does not grieve. So that ploughing is ploughed, it bears the fruit of immortality, having ploughed this, one is freed from all pain".

### 3.30

According to the above, we can find a threefold analysis of labour in the Tripitaka viz., (i) Physical labour (2) Mental labour and (3) Spiritual labour. The first type is used for production of goods and services. The farmer by tilling the field and the craftsman by engaging in his craft spend physical labour. The tradesman in organizing his activities and a Government servant

through administration spend mental labour. All this labour is for self benefit as well as for the benefit of others. Spiritual labour operates within oneself regulating one's thoughts, by eradicating bad thoughts and cultivating good thoughts. Primarily, this brings about the well being of oneself and subsequently the well being of others.

### 3.31

Though occasionally these three types of labour operate independent of each other, usually they function in a mutually related manner. For example, a craftsman who physically exerts to produce whatever item he wants, first makes a mental plan of his production. Similarly, it is possible for this craftsman to observe the changes in the materials used for his production, and considering the gradual waste taking place in them in the course of production, reflect on the real nature of things and develop detachment. Perhaps, this could lead him to develop insight which would bring about eradication of his craving. Thus, it is seen that both physical and mental labour contribute to his realization of the truth. Therefore, a Buddhist cannot assert that of the two types of labour, that is physical and mental, involved in production of goods and services one is higher than the other. Even in the Tripitaka such a distinction is not made, and hence, occupations are not hierarchically categorized. It is not the type of labour, but the righteousness or otherwise of it that is taken into account. The non-spending of labour itself is a factor that would contribute to the righteousness or to the inferior quality of work that is undertaken. That is why non-striving and laziness are condemned in Buddhism.

### 3.32

The **Kusitarambhavatthu Sutta**<sup>87</sup> of the **Anguttara nikaya** contains an important account of various instances of laziness, enumerated for the purpose of encouraging the individual to strive on. It enumerates a number of such instances. (1) It describes how when an individual wishes to do some work, he thinks "I have to

do some work" and doing I'll get fatigued. Then I will lie down". A person who lies down in this manner would not strive to attain what he has not realized. Similarly, if a person gives up his striving thinking (2) "I have worked and now I feel tired" (3) "I have to go somewhere, but its tiring" (4) I went on a journey, and now I am tired, (5) "I did not have enough to eat and drink, and therefore, I am lifeless. (6) "I feel too heavy after eating and drinking much, I am not pliant" (7). "I am not quite well my condition might get worsened" he is not regulating his thoughts.

### 3.33

Dr. Chandima Wijebandara and Moratuwagama analysing the fundamentals of Buddhist civilization says that Buddhism, which encourages people to work, highly esteem dignity of labour in the true sense of the term. Therefore striving hard, is not a cause for shame, but for pride. They also enumerate the Buddhist ideas that induce people to work harder.

- (1) Considering the things that you have to accomplish in the future, you should, now itself do what should be done now.
- (2) After the completion of some work do not relapse into lethargy; but find out things that you have failed to do during that period and attend to them.
- (3) Before starting a journey try to accomplish the work already undertaken.
- (4) After returning from a journey, find out the work undone during the period of absence and attend to them.
- (5) When you fail to obtain a filling meal just think you have the strength to go on, and that you have to accomplish whatever is possible before you feel more fatigued.
- (6) When you have taken a hearty meal, then think you have the strength to work hard and continue to work hard.
- (7) When you feel a little sick, try to finish your work before your sickness gets worsened.
- (8) When you recover from the sickness consider the work left undone during the period and attend on them.<sup>88</sup>

### 3.34

The **Panca Itthadhamma Sutta**<sup>89</sup> in the **Anguttara nikaya** not only explains the Buddhist attitude to labour and its philosophical back-ground, but also completely shatters certain widely prevalent silly views on labour. Though a very important Sutta in this context, it has not received the attention it really deserve. This Sutta records an admonition given by the Buddha to Anathapindika. The Buddha says, that life span, complexion, happiness, fame and heavenly bliss are five things which are desirable, dear and rare in the world. But, none of these could be obtained through begging or prayer. If they are so obtainable, in what respect would any one decline?<sup>90</sup> If one desires to have long life there is no purpose in begging or praying. One who wishes for longevity should follow the practice leading to longevity. This is so with regard to the other four qualities too.<sup>91</sup>

### 3.35

Certain views and beliefs which are detrimental to economic growth, which blunt man's ability to think and destroy his dynamism are prevalent among people irrespective of their religious faiths. This is specially so among people who are very low and who are observed with rites, rituals and superstitious beliefs. In Sri Lanka not only astrology, but even Bodhipuja has been brought down to such low depths. People not only spend money and labour on such superstitious beliefs, but succumb to them and become hapless victims of faith in gods and other supernatural spirits. The situation is not very different among the average individuals of other faiths. Hence, it is a great pity that a valuable fact related to economic matters embodied in the **Itthadhamma Sutta** as well as the encouragement it provides to the people has not received adequate attention of scholars up to now.

### 3.36

Another important aspect of the Buddhist attitude to labour is found in the **Accayika Sutta**.<sup>92</sup> This Sutta points out that it is

utterly foolish to accept instant success. The Sutta points out that normally it takes some time to achieve success and that success depends not only on effort, but also on other factors too. Herein the Buddha employs a simile from mundane life—from agriculture to explain the gradual journey to freedom, which is a spiritual effort. The Sutta shows that the said practice is relevant to the successful accomplishment of paths in both spheres i.e. material and spiritual. The farmer has no power, any kind of magical power, to make seeds sown to-day to take root tomorrow and mature the day after. However, due to changes in seasons and climate, grain would mature and ripen. Similarly no one possesses any magical power to make the mind free to-day or tomorrow. Yet, when one trains in higher morality, higher concentration and higher wisdom, one day the mind would be freed, from defilements. This Sutta suggests that there is an undue hurry due to lack of understanding and this would cause not one's success but downfall. **This also hints that the economy should not be weakened by unduly accelerated projects.**

### 3.37

Questions such as how the present society evaluates work and what's its attitude is to labour would be dealt with in detail under the 'concept of profit.' Here it suffices to draw the attention of the reader to an observation made by Bertrand Russell in his book entitled, *The conquest of Happiness*.<sup>93</sup> Therein he says :

"In most works success is measured by income, and while our capitalistic society continues, this is inevitable".

This petty observation sums up quite well the attitude of the present society to these issues.

### 3.38

Schumacher<sup>94</sup> makes the following observation on these issues from the point of view of an economist.

"The Buddhist point of view takes the function of the work to be at least threefold to give a man a chance to utilize and

develop his faculties; to enable him to overcome his ego centeredness by joining with other people in common task, and to bring forth the goods and services needed for a becoming existence".

The facts examined so far bring to light four main forces that spur Buddhists to work. All these forces are regulated and directed by the central philosophy of Buddhism namely, the doctrine of dependent origination. According to this the Buddhist doctrines of **dukkha**, **kamma** and rebirth mould the individual's conduct. All these factors have already been discussed in the section dealing with basic Buddhist concepts. The four forces that spur Buddhists to work are :

#### (i) Knowledge regarding the true nature of things

This consists of the acceptance of the fact that the prevailing conditions are unsatisfactory and that the man has the power to make them satisfactory; and that this is something that an individual can accomplish and should accomplish in this very life. To effect this change (i) one should fulfil the basic human needs (ii) one should strive to attain spiritual purity (these are included under Right view and Right Thought in the Noble Eightfold path).

#### (2) Meritorious intention

As one accepts the continuity of sansaric existence the performance of meritorious deeds, with the hope of attaining births conducive to the successful completion of the graduated path leading to emancipation is important to try to develop the three factors of the Noble Path (namely Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood).

#### (3) Wholesome intention

Irrespective of whether there is a next life or not acceptance of wholesome deeds is the direct path leading to freedom; morality is its foundation and morality could be cultivated only through the performance of right deeds in the society (perfection of the above mentioned three factors).

#### (4) The freed person

As a free person (**Arahant**) is endowed with friendliness and such other qualities he is naturally devoted to work for the well being of others.

The three factors referred to by Schumacher are subsumed under these four forces. The fourth in the above namely, the freed person has not been noted by Schumacher.

#### 3.39

Both in the public sector and in the private sector managerial efficiency is given special consideration when evaluating the success of any business. This managerial efficiency is well demonstrated by the three factors referred to above when explaining 'effort'. These factors are; ability to work, ability to organize, and the fact of being endowed with means and acumen. Ability to work connotes an individual's capacity and capability which is based on learning as well as on proficiency in a particular craft or industry which he is engaged in. **Bahusacca** (much learning) mentioned in the **Mangala Sutta** as a contributory factor to success is what is meant by learning in this context. Learning is a very important fact that contributes to the success of any undertaking. Without learning one will not be able to handle even labour properly. Even when considered in narrowest sense learning would mean at least literacy. But, definitely learning is writing, comprehension, listening, expressing of ideas and so on. Even the cultivation of collective work ethic is also a part of learning. Besides, all academic education, too, is included under the broad concept of learning.

#### 3.40

The **Mangala sutta** praises proficiency in a particular craft as a factor contributing to one's success. The Buddhist concept is that one should acquire this proficiency during one's young days itself; and it is pointed out that one who fails to do so would have to repent later.<sup>95</sup> The reference to **sippannatara** in the Buddhist

enumeration of occupations also stresses the importance of acquiring such proficiency. The Burmese Doctor R. L. Soni commenting on the term '**bahu sippam**' says:

"**Bahu-sippam** means 'proficiency in some art or handicraft, which implies practical knowledge of some art, science or handicraft. We understand that the Buddha saw skill in some art or craft as a blessing, too. Not only knowledge is praised by him, but also manual work, wherever this is not tainted by unwholesome actions. One's 'craft' should therefore be in accordance with the precepts when it may be used either for a hobby or livelihood. Among bhikkhus too there are 'crafts' which it is good to be skilled in - such as making robes - as such skills are a blessing for one's fellow monks.'<sup>96</sup>

#### 3.41

Another blessing according to the **Mangala Sutta** is, the fact of being engaged in 'unconfused activity (**anakula Kammanta**)'<sup>97</sup> **Akula** refers to both physical and mental confusion, specially the latter. If one is confused with regard to the way he performs his work, that would deprive him of all job satisfaction and happiness, and consequently, that would have an adverse effect on his performance, the expected result as well as on the righteous nature of the work.

#### 3.42

Advising Sigala the Buddha points out that one should not leave any loopholes or shortcomings in one's profession. The texts refer to this as '**acchiddavutti**'.<sup>98</sup> If one is engaged in production of goods, that should be done to the satisfaction of the consumer. Any shortcoming in the product will affect the whole industry and even cause its downfall. Not only with regard to productions one should take precautions to avoid even personal shortcomings and lapses. Therefore, any individual, or any industry or an institution that hopes to achieve success should show concern about such matters and take necessary preventive measures.

One who is learned and proficient in one's work is capable of efficiently performing one's undertaking. This quality is referred to in the **Metta sutta**<sup>99</sup> as 'sakko' and it is described as the basic step in personality development. Buddhism accepts the fact that just as in mundane affairs, in spiritual affairs too one should have knowledge as well as technical proficiency. In this context it should be recalled that in Buddhism objects of meditation are referred to as **Kammattthana** meaning 'work-place'. One who is efficient is capable of getting work done by others or in other words he is capable of organizing work. The phrase '**appamatto vidhanava**' occurring in the **Vyagghapajja Sutta** also denotes this idea. This organizational ability is important at personal level as well as at high managerial levels, and there are numerous suttas dealing with this. One aspect of this organizational ability is discussed under assignment of duties. The **Sigalovada Sutta** refers to this aspect as '**yatha balam kammanta sanvidhanena**'. In this context the word "**balam**" does not merely mean physical strength, but has a wider connotation covering learning, skill, training, experience, personality, ability to shoulder responsibility and so on. Quite often it is the unqualified applicant who is selected to some post. This is due to political and other influences and this could happen in any country. Such favouritism is the bane of business and industries in such countries. This is exactly why Buddhism firmly admonishes that when assigning work one should not do so under the influence of any of the four prejudices (**agati**) viz. attachment, (**chanda**), hatred (**dosa**) fear (**bhaya**) and confusion (**moha**)

The suttas point out that when entrusting responsible positions one should select the most suitable person. Placing a virtuous man or a woman in a responsible position is considered a factor that contributes to progress.<sup>100</sup> Here the word "**silavanta**" (virtuous) should be understood in the context of the stanza in the **Parabhava Sutta**<sup>101</sup> which runs as follows:

'Itthi sondim vikiranim purisam vapi tadisam  
Isariyasmin thapapeti tam parabhavato mukham"

This admonition points out that wherever a person, who is addicted to women, food and drinks, alcohol, gambling and such other evil practices, is placed in a position of responsibility, that particular undertaking is bound to decline. **Sila** or virtue means abstention from physical and verbal misdemeanour and where ever a person given to stealing and lying is at the helm of affairs there one cannot expect to see proper organization and management.

The most important factor in management is the skilfulness in employment of means and discriminative ability (**tatrupayaya vimamsaya samannagato**). When managing affairs one should be able to give consideration to such issues as "what are the best methods and means that should be adopted in order to achieve success?" "what are the vital factors that contribute to success and what factors would lead to downfall?" "What exactly are the methods employed in successful ventures?" and so on. An efficient manager who addresses himself to such issues and finds answers to them, would direct his course of action accordingly. These are the aspects that should be considered in any kind of enterprise, private, collective or public. An important feature in skilfulness means the taking of suitable steps at the proper time. The **Jataka**<sup>102</sup> book contains a good advice given to a ferryman which could be taken as a sound guideline by any entrepreneur. There was a ferryman who was in the habit of collecting the fare after ferrying the people. This habit led to unnecessary conflicts and the ferryman did not prosper. So the ferryman is advised to collect the fare before ferrying men across for once the river is crossed their minds too change.

The most important observation on this issue is found in the **Cakka Sutta**<sup>103</sup> of the **Anguttaranikaya**. It says that there are four

factors that cause the increase of wealth in a short time, and these are: (1) living in a congenial environment (2) association of good friends (3) establishment of oneself in right resolve and (4) being endowed with past merit. As these factors are explained in varied ways in the suttas, they deserve to be studied in some detail.

### 3.47

The first among these factors is also the one mentioned in the **Mangala Sutta**. Commenting on this Dr. R. L. Soni<sup>104</sup> says: "**patirupa desa vaso**" means residence in a suitable and pleasant locality. For life to be pleasant, the dwelling place must be comfortable, secure in construction, tidy and clean in appearance, properly maintained, and besides it is helpful if it is in a good neighbourhood and inhabited by agreeable people. The commentators amplify the meaning by explaining that a suitable locality should have in it people who practice the Noble Dhamma, evidence of this being the existence of shrines, monks and monasteries and many good people engaged in meritorious deeds. Residence in a place inhabited by quarrelsome and trouble making citizens, where one is bossed about by dictatorial and corrupt government, where the climate is inimical with frequent ravages of floods, famines, earthquakes and epidemics, where the air is changed with hatred and mutual suspicions and where freedom of thought and action are reduced to a minimum. In brief, residence in a place having many factors and conditions obstructive to the practise of Dhamma and not conducive to physical, moral and spiritual well being, is just the opposite of what is meant by a suitable environment".

What is emphasised here is the suitability of the material environment. In the world there are various kinds of places suitable for living, and if one naturally finds such a place, that would be very conducive to his economic prosperity. What should one do if one is not fortunate enough to find such a place?

### 3.48

Buddhism shows that there are two options open for an individual to select between according to his free will. One option is to find a new suitable place. The other is to change the place where one is already living and make it conducive to his well being. The **Kacchapa Jataka**<sup>105</sup> is an example that demonstrates the first option. It says that whether it is in the village or in the forest, wherever that gives happiness, such a place is the place of birth, place of growth for any wise person. He would go to any place that is conducive to his well being. Indeed such a person will not lose a place he is living not at all conducive to his progress. Numerous are those who have attained success by venturing out of one's village of birth, or even out of the country of one's birth. Had those people remained in the same place they would have fared miserably.

An individual has to decide whether to continue to reside in the same place or to seek a new environment. However, a Buddhist does not take decisions concerning progress purely on personal considerations for, a good person, according to Buddhism, is one who is concerned about his parents, relations, friends etc.. As shown in the **Pattakamma Sutta** such a person knows that the second of the four most welcome qualities in the world is the ability to think 'may I prosper along with my relatives and teachers'. What one should note here is that Buddhist teachings do not permit a person to continue living in the place of his birth knowing quite well that continuous living there would lead to his destruction. However, what is more important for a Buddhist is to convert the bad place into a good one. Buddhism clearly rejects the view that one should give in to external forces and endure the prevailing conditions however bad such condition may happen to be. As shown in such suttas as **Titthayatana** and **Itthadhamma**, man has the power to bring about material changes and, to an extent, even changes in nature, too. As shown by examples in the present time man is capable of even turning deserts into very prosperous regions, and that he is capable of making artificial rain. Besides accomplishing such difficult tasks, everyone is capable of doing something,

however, small it may be, to improve the environment in which one lives.

### 3.49

The **Cakka sutta** mentions the social factor as the second of the four factors leading to increase in wealth. Its implications on the personal level will only be dealt in this context. The **parabhava sutta**<sup>(106)</sup> enumerates becoming dear to the evil ones, disliking good ones and desiring the ways of the evil ones, as causes leading to downfall. The **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>107</sup> also mentions association with evil friends, with those who are addicted to women, gambling and liquor and those who are swindlers as one of the six avenues of dissipation of wealth. As the adverse effect of evil company is quite obvious it is not necessary to detail it here. The opposite of these evil friends are the good ones, the learned, wise friends. The **Mangala Sutta** cites association with the wise as a blessing. The **Sigalovada Sutta** gives a very lucid account of the friends and enemies in the guise of friends. According to the **Vyagghapajja sutta**<sup>108</sup> any person, irrespective of his age, who is endowed with qualities such as morality, charity wisdom etc. is a good friend.

### 3.50

In reply to Ven. Ananda, who said that association with the good comprises half of noble life, the Buddha in the **Kalyanamitta Sutta**<sup>109</sup> declared that it is not merely half of noble life but the whole of noble life Paratoghosa - that is advice, instruction, admonition form the good is regarded as one of the two factors that leads to the rise of the right view.<sup>110</sup> The **Samyutta nikaya**<sup>111</sup> refers to association with the good as the first of the four factors that constitute **sotapatti** stage.

### 3.51

The man is a social being and lives in the company of relatives, neighbours, colleagues, friends and so on. If these associates are endowed with virtuous qualities they are called good friends. However, if they are bad and addicted to women, gambling, liquor

etc., their influence will cause dissipation of wealth. On the contrary, the company of good friends will lead to the increase in wealth for, such good friends will protect the wealth of the neglectful friend, will help him more when he is in need of help, be faithful to him in adversity; will always dislike his downfall but rejoice at his prosperity will treat him with the fourfold ways of hospitality (**sangahavatthu**) and so on.<sup>112</sup> A Buddhist, understanding that the influence of a neighbour is a social factor that has vital bearing on his well being or ill being should, if the neighbours are bad, try to make them good; failing that should try to live diplomatically. Failing all this, he should look out for a better neighbourhood.

### 3.52

A person who is concerned about his economic progress should be specially mindful of establishing himself properly. This is referred to in the text as '**atta - samma panidhi**', a phrase impregnated with meaning. However, in this context it connotes the acquisition of qualities that are necessary to make him fit to tread the proper path that leads to economic prosperity.

Among these qualities are both mental and physical proficiencies as well as the regulation of his conduct. Buddhism accepts the fact that there are differences among individuals and differences in their faculties. Therefore, it is of primary importance for one to recognize one's own potential and properly nurture them. The **Atthasadvaya jataka** enumerates six gateways to progress, which are also primarily important to personality development. These six are 1. health 2. morality 3. approval of elders 4. learning 5. conformity with righteousness and 6. dynamism.<sup>113</sup>

### 3.53

The fourth factor enumerated herein namely, learning (**bahussuta**) has already been discussed (para; 3.39). Generally it means acquisition of knowledge or skill in some craft. The development of physical and mental abilities is a basic

requirement. Dynamism (**alinata**) is the same as non-laziness, making effort to progress. Virtue is physical and verbal restraint, and in this context what is meant is morality, good conduct or accepted form of social relations. Conformity with righteousness (**dhammanuvatti**) means living a life of non-violence, a life marked by friendliness and compassion. All these are conducive to proper moulding of one's conduct.

### 3.54

Health, too, is a vital factor for one who desires economic progress, and this includes both physical and mental health. Even a mild sickness has adverse effects on one's productivity. It is still worse if it is a mental sickness. A mentally deranged or unbalanced person cannot perform work systematically. When the mind is disturbed and restless one tends to mess up all his undertakings. How worse it would be if one is mentally sick? Forgetfulness, lack of a system, mistakes, and lapses, harmful relations, unbecoming behaviour are all results of mental sicknesses. All these are definite avenues leading to dissipation of wealth. A person with a pleasant mind will be able to make his work place pleasant, to cultivate cordial relationships, perform his duties diligently, quickly and successfully and put his plans into operation.

### 3.55

Another important factor is complying with views approved by the elders (**vuddhanumata**). According to Buddhism an 'elder' (**vuddha**) does not necessarily mean a person who is senior in age. One can be called an 'elder' irrespective of his age, taking into consideration his mature moral qualities, his learning, restraint and so on. They are some sort of 'specialists' as they are referred to in modern parlance, and their advice is imperative for the success of any venture. Some can be 'elders' in age, and though they may not be advanced in learning, they may be quite rich in their experience. The advice of such elders, too, would be of much use for the success of any undertaking. Through the advice of this sort of 'elders' one could evaluate the progress of one's work, avoid

future disasters and obstacles by taking suitable preventive measures, employ quick measures to achieve goals, obtain necessary resources and so on. Therefore, properly establishing oneself is to understand the 'getaways' to material progress and regulate one's livelihood accordingly.

### 3.56

The **Kula Sutta**,<sup>114</sup> too, enumerates four factors leading to increase in wealth and these demonstrate another way of properly establishing oneself. Therein it is said that those who have increased wealth (1) search for what is lost (2) repair what is dilapidated (3) practice moderation in food and drinks and (4) places a virtuous person - either male or female - in authority. If one is not quite alert and conscious, one may not realize how wealth dissipates when one fails to search and keep secure what is lost, or when one fails to mend whatever is damaged and broken. One may realize this a little too late. Going to excesses in food habits as well as over-spending on consumption is a positive cause of dissipation of wealth. Even the **Sigalovada Sutta** emphasises this aspect when it says that one should set aside one portion of one's income for consumption and so on.<sup>115</sup> It emphasises, investment of two portions in some profitable venture. Though this advice in the **Sigalovada Sutta** is to a businessman, it is suitable for any person. Saving is also important for, it becomes quite useful in times of need. Even at present saving and insurance are considered effective methods of dealing with future uncertainties.

### 3.57

The various causes that lead to the dissipation of wealth enumerated by the Buddha in Suttas such as **Parabhava**, **Vyagghapajja** and **Sigalovada** are quite well known. The six causes listed in the **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>116</sup> are addiction to (1) liquor (2) gambling (3) loitering (4) frequenting carnivals etc. (5) association of evil friends, and (6) laziness. Not all these six, even one would suffice to turn a wealthy person into a beggar. Some such instances have already been discussed and it is

sufficient here to analyse in detail one of these causes in order to obtain a clear understanding of the Buddhist perspective regarding these causes. Addiction to liquor heads the list of such causes enumerated in the **Sigalovada Sutta**. Obviously a liquor addict has to spend his wealth on intoxicants. Police reports show that most quarrels and crimes are related to consumption of liquor. Inevitable consequences of liquor addiction are loss of labour and man hours. Medical expenses as well as lack of mental and physical health causes loss of wealth. Being branded a drunkard one loses self-respect and consequently loses social status, and is even removed from positions of responsibility. Many are the ill-effects of being addicted to liquor. Medical experts have shown that even a small quantity of liquor would cause, some damage to brain cells, resulting in loss of memory and reasoning, affecting all activities aimed at bringing about progress. It leads to heedlessness. Driving after consumption of liquor has been identified as a main cause of road-accidents. Taken either individually or severally all these causes enumerated above inevitably lead to loss of wealth. The **Vyagghapajja sutta**<sup>117</sup> very graphically demonstrates this fact with a use of a simile. It says that getting addicted to liquor is like closing the gates that let the water into a pond while keeping the gates that let the water out open. Thus, a very effective method of establishing oneself properly is to identify the causes that bring about loss of wealth and avoid them.

### 3.58

Thus a person desiring economic progress being alert and skilful in means, would create a congenial environment, conduct good social relations and establish himself properly. This is the correct manner in which a Buddhist should put forth effort to make a right livelihood. If these conditions are adequate to bring about the economic progress of a self-reliant Buddhist, what is the reason for enumerating, 'former merit' as another necessary factor?

It is seen that the **Mangala Sutta** mentions 'being endowed with merits done previously (**pubbe ca kata puññata**) also as regarded a blessing. This could mean merit accrued through deeds done in former existences as well as that accrued through deeds done at some stage in this very life, come into fruition either in the present or in the future. For example, good education received in childhood would enable one to obtain a decent job or start a profitable venture. So does the spiritual training one has received. Similarly merit accrued through deeds done in former births also become conducive to the success of present life. This is the reason for the difference in capabilities and potential among individuals.

### 3.59

There are many who effortlessly become heirs to legacies and windfalls. Wins in lotteries, acquisition of gems etc, land and property received from others and other sudden and unexpected gains bring about confusion in the individual. Knowledge regarding 'former merit' is necessary to remain sane and unconfused, and become a useful person on occasions of such unexpected sudden enrichment.

Not only gain, even loss of wealth throws an individual into confusion. A self reliant person may rightly earn his wealth. But, he might lose all his wealth in the most unexpected manner; either due to some natural calamity or being robbed or confiscated. To face such a situation and to remain unmoved and undisturbed, one needs will power. This is why the ability to remain unmoved in such situations is considered an essential requisite for prosperity<sup>(118)</sup>. A proper understanding of the significant role played by 'former merit' helps to create the necessary mental background to face such unexpected situations.

How consequence of former deeds influence the present progress as well as down-fall has been amply demonstrated in the Tripitaka. Present events too-quite often make it clear. A Buddhist who is not misled by the Kamma- determinism would not get frightened by these vicissitudes of life. In order to get the maximum prospects of

human life he should understand in accordance with the doctrine of cause and effect, the significance of the consequences of former deeds of four of the five universal laws (viz, physical, biological, psychological and spiritual - *utu, bija, citta, dhamma*) operate, then he finds that there is some other force which is not the God, fate or, ill-luck, but the consequences of his own former deeds, for which he himself is solely responsible.

### (c) SCRUPULOUSNESS IN PRODUCTIVITY

#### 3.60

What has been considered so far is the concept of right livelihood. It is opportune now, to examine the concept of 'scrupulousness.' The *Mahacattarisaka Sutta* in order to distinguish right livelihood from wrong livelihood describes the latter in the following manner. "*Katamo ca bhikkhave miccha-ajivo, Kuhana; lapana, nemittikata nippesikata labhena labham nijigimsanta ayam bhikkhave, miccha-ajivo*" <sup>119</sup>

The commentators appear to have had monks in mind when commenting on the above mentioned factors that constitute wrong livelihood. However, as 'profitability' (*atthasamhita*) is a concept that is equally applicable to the laity, it should be understood in the context of economic activity.

#### 3.61

- (i) The word '*Kuhana*' denotes hypocrisy, or scheming and one could be a hypocrite through verbal or physical activity. The *Visuddhimagga* <sup>120</sup> in order to explain this word quotes from *khuddaka vatthu vibhanga*.

"Herein what is scheming? It is grimacing grimacery, scheming, schemery, schemedness by what is called rejection of requisites or by indirect talk, or it is the disposing, posing, composing of the deportment on the part of one bent on gain, honour and renown, of one of evil wishes - this is called scheming."

#### 3.62

- (ii) '*Lapana*' is to use the medium of language cunningly to hide true facts and present a wrong picture for the purpose of one's benefit. For example, in the case of a trader '*Lapana*' means any talk or discussion done for his own gain. He could achieve this by falsely praising himself as well as the buyer, by talking in a manner appealing to the buyer, or talking in a way that even demeans his ownself. His aim is to deceive and win over the buyer and make some gain for himself. Not only a trader, a person engaged in any profession could adopt such a course of action.
- (iii) '*Nemittikata*' means prognostication. That is to make either verbally or physically any suggestion or gesture that would bring gain and benefit to oneself.
- (iv) '*Nippesikata*'. This means to insult and degrade others with the intention of securing one's own benefit. It is easy for a superior officer to use his official capacity to silence a junior officer, to reprimand him, to intimidate him to ridicule him and insult him.
- (v) '*Labhena labham nijigimsanta*'. This is to be always concerned about making excessive profit. Like the other factors this too, is a cruel attitude one could adopt while pursuing a righteous profession. <sup>121</sup>

#### 3.63

From the above account it is obvious that righteousness of one's profession by itself is not a sufficient cause to make one's livelihood a righteous one. This is why the *Rasiya Sutta* emphasises both aspects '*dhamma*' (righteousness) and '*asahasa*' (scrupulousness lit, non - violence) prof. Lily de Silva <sup>122</sup> Observes:

"Even a blameless means of living can become blameworthy if practiced with inordinate greed and dishonesty. If a doctor in private practice makes mints of money exploiting his patients, he is guilty of wrong livelihood, even though medicine itself is a noble profession. A vegetable dealer who

cheats in weights and measures is similarly guilty of wrong livelihood. Honest scrupulous service rendered without exploiting the public is considered an essential feature of right livelihood".

### 3.64

Scrupulousness is explained in many other Suttas. The **Samaññapala Sutta**<sup>123</sup> explains it as not engaging in any kind of cheating with weights and measures (**tulakutakamsakuta manakuta pativirata**). Abstention from taking bribes, from cheating and defrauding, from passing off imitation products as original products and all kinds of such other fraudulent acts. Not only these, it also means to abstain from all kinds of cruelties such as killing, cutting of limbs, tying with ropes and so on.

### 3.65

Cheating with weights and measures is the form of exploitation specially employed in trade. Acceptance of bribes and all sorts of deceitful acts are common in other spheres. Unscrupulous exploitation of labour and intimidation are more common in the private sector than in the public sector; and specially so with regard to unskilled labour such as daily paid labourers and house-maids, domestic servants and so on. All these exploitations are really unscrupulous, irrespective of the social standing of the perpetrators of such acts. Wealth earned through any kind of exploitation is wealth obtained through unrighteousness.

### 3.66

This does not mean that Buddhism is against profit making; nor should the concept of 'profit making' be understood as being merely confined to making a profit in whatever manner possible. No business could be carried on without making a profit. The **Vephulla Sutta**<sup>124</sup> clearly explains that a businessman should be farsighted enough to consider the value of an item, its buying price, the selling price and the profit margin. Therein itself it is said that both buying and selling should be done without any kind of

defrauding or cheating. Therefore, it is seen that according to Buddhism it is not only permissible, but also necessary to make a profit. Yet, it should be done in a scrupulous manner; in a honest way. Profit making should not be the sole concern. When one gets obsessed with the idea of profit making, one tends to become merciless and fleece the customer. It is not only customer that suffers; even workers become victims of ruthless exploitation of masters and businessman.

### 3.67

Buddhism does not consider the worker as a mere item meant for sale. To denote the labour force, the workers, the servants and employees Buddhist texts use the compound term '**dasakammakara porisa**.' The **Pattakamma Sutta**<sup>125</sup> groups all these categories of employees along with the master's wife and children, and says that it is the duty of the master to make all persons, the wife, children and employees happy and delighted. Even the **Pancabhogadiya Sutta**<sup>126</sup> makes a similar reference to the family members and employees, referring to all of them in the same compounded term, thus making it clear that they all should be treated alike. What is expected by this is to protect the value of human beings.<sup>127</sup> The **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>128</sup> explains in detail the proper employer-employee relationship. It enumerates five duties of an employer towards an employee. These are (i) assignment of work in accordance with the strength of the employee, (ii) provision of food and wages (iii) provision of medical care (iv) sharing of tasty, special food and (v) granting of leave at the proper times.

### 3.68

When it is said that work should be assigned to the strength of the employee, it is not only his physical strength that is meant. It also includes his learning, training, experience, strength of character, honesty, ability to shoulder responsibility and all such psychological, spiritual and personality characteristics. To assign an employee any work which is far too much for his physical

capability or to make an employee overwork, or to assign work without considering training and experience, and or any other form of inconsiderate assignment of work is certainly a kind of exploitation of labour. Another duty is to provide both food and wages. The emphasis laid on the provision of food is very important. The provision of food is in addition to paying wages. Here it should be clearly understood that what is meant by 'bhatta-vetana' is not wages for food but 'food and wages'. If this is not properly interpreted unscrupulous masters could interpret this for their own benefit and take it to mean 'wages for food'. Prof. Jotiya Dhirasekera makes a very illuminating observation on this. He clearly points out that this phrase clearly means the provision of food, and in addition to that the payment of wages. He points out that this duty was followed by king Dutthagamani with regard to those who served in the construction of the Mahathupa at Anuradhapura.<sup>129</sup> The commentaries also show that what is meant is provision of daily food and monthly wages.<sup>130</sup>

### 3.69

An employer's duty is to see to the good health of the employee. It is a fact that even to get the best out of an employee his health should be cared for. But in this context something more than this is meant. An employer is here expected to organize work in such a way that it would be conducive to both the mental and physical health of an employee. The sharing of tasty food means the offering of inducements to the employee, and this includes all kinds of incentives. Another way of exploiting labour is to make employees over work, without granting them leave at the proper time or without properly fixing their working hours. This is why Buddhist texts emphatically mention that employers should not make employees overwork, and that they should fix the 'work-shifts' and provide leave to employees at the proper time. Similarly, an employer should consider the employees age, his health and physical ability and provide pension benefits for him at the proper time.

### 3.70

This is the Buddhist teaching an employer is expected to follow with regard to his employees. If these norms are adhered to, there would not be any kind of exploitation of labour as the duties of the employer would turn out to be the rights of the employee. There would not be any necessity to fight for employees' rights. The employer employee relationship is a cordial relationship between two people engaged in two different functions, and certainly it's not a shameless relationship between an employee who has fallen into the state of saleable item and a employer who is bewildered through prosperity.

Just as the employers, employee too is engaged in some sort of a livelihood. When his needs are fulfilled the employee would be induced to perform his task most earnestly and willingly. The *Sigalovada Sutta* enumerates five reciprocal duties that an employee owes an employer. These are (i) to rise up early (ii) to sleep late (iii) to refrain from stealing (vi) to discharge the duties well and (v) to speak well of the employer. These are equally applicable to an household employee as well as to a office worker or to any other worker. At present a majority of the workers, who are not quite satisfied, usually tend to be late when reporting to work and in the same way tend to leave their work places before the time of closure. But this does not happen in work places where the workers are all content, this is so with regard to other factors enumerated above. Thus, it is clear that if the employers discharge their duties properly, the employees, as their rights are fulfilled, would become contented and would perform their tasks properly.

### 3.71

It is not only human beings that become subject to exploitation. Animals and even nature become hapless victims of man's desire to maximize his profit margin. Animal Kingdom vegetation and physical environment become objects of man's ruthless exploitation. It is quite often seen how man ill-treats and exploits animals that help him to make his living. This ill treatment is fairly common with regard to beasts of drought such as bulls, horses and

asses. Even elephants are not exempted. This is nothing other than another manifestation of man's overwhelming desire to increase his profit.

### 3.72

As in all other instances, in using resources and all kinds of items that help production one should be aware of the proper limits. The Buddhist texts say that just as a Universal Monarch (cakkavattiraja) even a cowherd should know the proper limits. The **Mahagopalaka Sutta** very graphically explains this. It enumerates eleven things a good cowherd should avoid doing. One such thing is milking the cows and making them completely go dry. This is referred to an '**anavasesadohi**', that is milking without leaving any milk in the udder. The opposite is '**savasesadohi** the milking of cows leaving enough milk in the udder for the calves. This, of course, is merely to show how a bhikkhu should know his limits and accept only requisites that he really needs.<sup>131</sup> This 'knowing of limits' is a basic principle in Buddhist economics, This shows clearly how, in Buddhist economics, animals are spared from exploitation.

### 3.73

Due to the greediness man even exploits plant life. Materialistic economy does not recognize the cordial relationship that should prevail between man and plant life. The Buddhist attitude to this is effectively put across in the **Sigalovada Sutta** through the simile of a bee.<sup>132</sup> Prof Lily de Silva's comment on this is worth noting.<sup>133</sup>

"..... man must learn to cooperate with nature. Here we are reminded of an admonition given by Buddha that amassing wealth man must exploit nature as a bee collects pollen. The bee harms neither the beauty of the flower nor its fragrance. Similarly man must not pollute or rob nature of its richness, beauty and its rejuvenating and replenishing capacity. This is the real implication of right livelihood when it comes to the utilization of natural resources."

### 3.74

When one takes into account all these factors one might begin to wonder whether right livelihood is a practical ideal. The gravity of all this has been well brought out by John Walters;<sup>134</sup>

"In this modern world right livelihood can be one of the most difficult rules to obey. So many kinds of work are harmful to society and are unworthy of a true Buddhist. There are the arms and nuclear warfare industries, the drink trade; occupations involving the slaughter of animals; yellow journalism; dishonest advertising and publicity, and business that includes usury. Buddhism is not a narrow minded religion. It regards human frailties with understanding and sympathy. Yet the sincere Buddhist cannot profess one code of morality and earn his livelihood in an occupation with another debased code."

### 3.75

It is not only in the present that this has been a difficult task. One should not be too hasty to conclude that rules proclaimed to a very simple type of society are inapplicable to the modern complex society. Even that old simple society found it difficult to keep up to this type of right livelihood. Two stanzas in the **Dhammapada**<sup>135</sup> make this point clear.

"Easy is the life of a shameless one who is as impudent as a crow, back-biting, presumptuous, arrogant and corrupt.

Hard is the life of a modest one who ever seeks purity, is detached, humble, clean in life and reflective."

It is because of this difficulty that the commentator Ven. Buddhaghosa says that virtue of purity of livelihood should be cultivated with effort.<sup>136</sup> The **Mahacattarisaka sutta**<sup>(137)</sup> also says that right effort follows right livelihood.

### III. CONSUMPTION, SHARING AND CONSERVATION

#### 3.76

The individual who enjoys 'atthi sukha' or economic stability in the righteous manner described above should obtain the happiness of enjoyment or happiness deriving from consumption of wealth. This is explained as follows in the *Anana Sutta*.<sup>138</sup>

"Householder, what is meant by *bhoga sukha*- the happiness of consumption of wealth? This is the gladness, happiness a son of a householder enjoys thinking "I will enjoy the wealth righteously earned through effort, collected with the strength of one's own hands, with one's own sweat; shall perform meritorious deeds with such wealth. This indeed is what is meant by happiness of consumption of wealth".

The *Rasiya Sutta*<sup>139</sup> which summarises the canonical views on consumption of wealth explains four major factors related to it. These are (i) with that wealth one pleases and makes oneself happy (ii) one shares that wealth (iii) performs meritorious deeds using that wealth and (iv) enjoys it without being enslaved by it, without being confused by it, being guiltless, knowing its evil consequences and being detached.

#### 3.77

The *Pattakamma Sutta* and the *Pancabhogadiya Sutta* are also important with regard to this, and they are very similar in content. The following are the main factors referred to in these two suttas.

- I. (i) The noble disciple pleases himself and makes himself happy with the wealth earned righteously and enjoys it in comfort.
- (ii) He protects and well looks after his parents.

(iii) He protects and well looks after his wife and children and his servants and workers.

(iv) Protects and pleases his friends.

II. (v) He protects his wealth from getting destroyed by fire or water, from being confiscated, from being stolen or falling into the hands of undesirable ones. Similarly whenever there arises some difficulty then he would make use of his well protected wealth and tide over the difficulty.

III. With his well earned wealth he will duly perform the five incumbent duties namely, perform duties towards relatives, guests, departed ones, government (by paying taxes) and towards gods (that is perform religious duties)

IV. He would offer gifts to all such religious men who abstain from sloth and negligence, who are bent on kindness and forbearance, who are self-controlled, calm and pacified.

These are the four good opportunities secured by him, turned into merit and fittingly made use of. It is seen that this handling of one's wealth constitutes proper allocation, protection and consumption.

#### 3.78

In consumption of wealth the first thing mentioned is about an individual's concern regarding his own happiness and well being. Then subsequently he looks after his parents, the family and others. There are some who, though they possess enough wealth, are unable to enjoy it happily. There are even beggars who just beg and collect money, and die of starvation without enjoying what they have collected by begging. The *Myhaka Jataka*<sup>141</sup> mentions about a bird called Myhaka that lives in a tree called pulila growing near mountain slopes and caverns. When the Pulila fruits ripen this bird cries loud saying 'mayham mayham'. While it continues crying other birds that flock under the tree eat the fruits and fly away. This particular bird goes on crying without eating.

Commenting on this the Jataka says that in the same way some people in the world amass wealth, but do not share it with others, nor do they themselves enjoy the wealth. They neither dress or eat with that wealth. nor do they adorn themselves with flowers and scents, nor treat any relative. While they continue saying 'this wealth is mine' either kings, thieves or enemies will take their wealth away. Therefore a wise person who acquires wealth will treat his relations. This will bring him fame and also will lead him to heaven where he will rejoice.<sup>142</sup>

### 3.79

Wealth is meant to be put into use and not to be merely collected for, those who stingily collect wealth and lead miserable lives would sometimes have to witness their wealth falling into the hands of others, or after his death some others would inherit it. Hoarding of wealth is against the Buddhist practice and the **Pathama-aputtaka Sutta**<sup>143</sup> of the **Kosala Samyutta** clearly illustrates this. Once King Pasenadi who visited the Buddha during the mid of the day said "In Savatthi a lay millionaire died heirless. I took his wealth to the palace. He possessed over eighty lakhs worth of gold, the value of his silver was even more. Yet, he never enjoyed a good meal, his dress was a three-pieced patched robe and his chariot was a rickety old one". The Buddha told the King that it is improperly utilized wealth, and that wealth is meant to please and make oneself happy, to well - treat parents, relations, friends and others and to utilize for meritorious purposes. If not wealth would vanish either through natural calamities such as fire, floods etc. or through stealing or even being confiscated. The Buddha explained further that unused wealth is like a pond with crystal clear water, but possessed by non-humans, for then no one would be able to use that water. While the one who properly uses his wealth is considered good, one who does not do so is called an evil person. The wealth of a good person is compared to a beautiful pond frequented and made use of by people around.

### 3.80

It is well known that both practices namely, indulgence in sensual pleasures and self-mortification are rejected by the Buddha as two extremes.<sup>144</sup> The **Ariyapariyesena Sutta**<sup>145</sup> also tells how the Buddha gave up self-mortification and adopted a moderate way of living in order to facilitate his search for the truth. In the **Vyagghapajja Sutta**<sup>146</sup> the Buddha denounces hoarding of wealth and stingy living as the life of a destitute who dies of starvation. One of the criteria of distinguishing good from bad is to follow the world opinion and regulate one's life accordingly. Non use of acquired wealth is against the accepted pattern of life.

### 3.81

As mentioned above the **Pattakamma Sutta** evaluates the four suitable opportunities open for a person to spend his earnings in a commendable way. It says that the wealth spent in ways other than these amounts to ill-spending.<sup>147</sup> The word '**thanagata**' is used in this sutta to denote 'directed to the proper place, similarly '**pattagata**', is used to mean 'accrued to the suitable person Patta kamma denotes' 'suitable deed'.

### 3.82

As it is incumbent upon a Buddhist to use properly his righteously acquired wealth it becomes necessary to study in detail the proper ways of using wealth.

Certainly, wealth is not meant to be hoarded. What is meant by "**bhoga sukha**" - the happiness of enjoyment is not happiness that is derived out of the feeling that there is wealth that is stored up. **bhoga-sukha** really means the happiness, the delight one experiences when one knows "I have well spent my wealth". Therefore, spending is a must. In whatever righteous means the wealth is acquired, such wealth should not be merely hoarded, it should be distributed among those who are related in different ways to the possessor of wealth. If wealth is not properly circulated in this manner, it becomes an unrighteous way of handling wealth. It

is this circulation of wealth that is referred to by the term **samvibhajati** in the **Rasiya Sutta**. A true Buddhist cannot say that, 'this wealth is mine and that it's no one else's business, let it be with me'. According to Buddhist economic principles wealth should necessarily be circulated and, hence, a wealthy Buddhist cannot have poor parents or poor relatives around him. If he enjoys the wealth all alone, then he is an evil person, a person who enjoys his wealth in an unrighteous manner, and a person who does things that should not be done.

### 3.83

The **Parabhava Sutta** points out that enjoyment of wealth all alone is a cause of downfall of such a person.<sup>148</sup> The discourse explains how this downfall takes place. Association of good friends is a factor that equally influences the well being of both the clergy and laity. The **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>149</sup> emphasises the importance of associating good friends as a factor that is conducive to the well being of household life. The term friend has a wider connotation, and this is clear from the **Mitta Sutta** of the **Samyuttanikaya**.<sup>150</sup> To develop friendship means to develop cordial relations with all sections of the society, and such relationship would contribute in numerous ways to the progress of an individual; and it is possible that the progress of an individual who leads an aloof life would be adversely affected because of lack of good friendship. The **Alavaka Sutta**<sup>151</sup> says that friends are won through liberality and charity. The **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>152</sup> lucidly describes benefits of good friendship.

### 3.84

A major cause of social conflict is the enjoyment of wealth by the rich without sharing it with those who are less privileged. Thus sharing of wealth is a factor conducive to social harmony and the Buddha made this clear in the **Kosambiya Sutta**.<sup>153</sup> Therein it is said even a meal should be enjoyed by sharing it. It is said that when those who have eat alone, those who do not have feel dejected, irritated and even become jealous and angry. Even the

**Vyagghapajja Sutta** says that the world looks down upon those who enjoys food without sharing. The ill-fame of such an individual will cause damage to him, would deprive him of attaining a high position and affect his social status. Buddhism speaks not only of economic and material loss that befalls such a person, but also of the spiritual decline that takes place. Such a behaviour would not be conducive to the development of an attitude of renunciation which leads to release, but to the increase of desire for enjoyment of pleasure which leads to bondage. Thus it produces internal conflict instead of internal peace.

### 3.85

While discussing about Buddhist social philosophy, it was shown how vital are the four ways of hospitality (**sangahavatthu**) to social harmony. It was made clear that even parent-child relationship would not prevail, if not for these four ways of hospitality. It is the axle pin of the chariot wheel called the society.<sup>154</sup> And dana or giving is the first item in the four ways of hospitality.

### 3.86

The **Pattakamma Sutta** which enumerates four rare factors that an individual should necessarily acquire, lists also another four factors that are necessary for the success of the former four factors. These are **saddha** (faith), **sila** (morality) **caga** (liberality) and **pañña** (wisdom). Herein **caga** connotes giving. A writer who comments on 'caga' as explained in the **Pattakamma Sutta** says that Buddhist social philosophy does not consider money as the supreme goal, it considers the economy through an ethical perspective or a righteous view point. Hence, if Buddhist social philosophy is functioning then there would not be hoarding of wealth around individuals, instead there would be circulation of wealth. This becomes clear, when examining the Buddhist concept of 'caga' which is both a virtue of the pious lay devotee and a factor conducive to the realization of Nibbana. A Person who is endowed with 'caga' would volunteer to provide the basic

necessities of life of an individual. A true Buddhist householder is one who had discarded miserliness. His mind would always be bent on charity. He would be liberal without expecting fame, praise and gain. He would always be inclined to donate to the best of his ability whatever he possesses to fulfil the needs of another. If there is any necessity of life of a person, then he would remind it with the hope fulfilling it. He would be desirous of giving and distributing.<sup>155</sup> The same writer further says that a true Buddhist practises 'caga' voluntarily. It is a quality that unfolds in a person who has developed faith and morality through right view and right thought. When this noble quality of 'caga' is well formed in an individual, there would not be any struggle for enjoyment. Then one would enjoy resources not individually, but as an institutional enjoyment. According to Buddhism earning of wealth does not mean the accumulation of wealth around a particular individual, it is the circulation of wealth to the proper place, to some worthy task that has arisen. Buddhism divides the social institution into two broad categories. One category is the individual and the family. The other is the individual and social relations outside the family. Buddhism holds in esteem the method of enjoyment which prevails in that institution.<sup>156</sup>

### 3.87

From this it is clear that Buddhism does not consider an individual's material progress and spiritual progress as two forces going in two different directions, but mutually related processes converging in one goal. An individual's righteous material progress signals his spiritual uplift; and his charity and liberality give him inner purification. This provides an opportunity for his personal progress, and simultaneously brings about a social progress. This does not depend merely on the charitableness of those who have nor is it based on the mean concept that the poor could sustain themselves only if the rich extend their charity towards them. This is seen in Buddhism as a right of both the rich and the poor; or more precisely the duty and the obligation of those who have, turns into the right of those who do not have, and this fact is made very

clear in the Sigalovada Sutta. Thus it is seen that the Buddhist concept reaches a much higher level, going beyond both capitalism and socialism which are mere two materialistic nomenclatures.

### 3.88

Buddhism says that an individual when enjoying his wealth should also, besides being considerate towards his nearest kith and kin and friends, should pay attention to his relations and visitors. This is connoted by the two terms 'gnati bali' (duties towards relations) and 'atithi bali' (duties towards visitors). While the **Mangala Sutta** esteems the proper treating of relations, the **Parabhava Sutta** mentions its neglect as a cause leading to the downfall of an individual.<sup>157</sup> **Pubbapeta bali** (duties towards the departed ones) is also stressed, and this shows that Buddhism considers that respect shown to prevailing religious beliefs and customs is conducive to the welfare of social beings. However high one's philosophy of life may be, one has to pay heed to the prevailing customs and beliefs which are not harmful, and **devata bali** or 'duties towards deities' too should be given thought to. One should not try to argue that honouring the dead and offering to the deities are not in keeping with Buddhism and, hence, should not be followed by Buddhists. The **Sigalovada Sutta** mentions that it is a duty incumbent on children to perform religious rites for the benefit of dead parents. Adherence to harmless social customs and practices is conducive to social well being.

Besides these, an individual owes a duty to the state **rajabali** and this is the payment of taxes in lieu of various benefits and privileges one enjoys. These include all kinds of taxes such as income tax, direct and indirect taxes, land and property tax, business tax and so on.

When one performs these five duties an individual fulfils his role as a person, as a citizen, and as a member of the society in which he lives. An individual who leads a 'Buddhist life' should fulfil these without fail. These are the duties referred to in

**Pattakamma Sutta** when it uses such concepts as '**thanagata**', '**Pattagata, ayatana paribhojana**'. And the fulfilment of these is what is referred to as **samvibhajana** in the **Rasiya Sutta**.

### 3.89

The Buddha draws attention to another important aspect which the people normally tend to overlook when enjoying wealth. When there is enough wealth the people generally do not think the possibility of losing wealth. But this is something every one should anticipate, give thought to and adopt preventive measures in time; so that one would not have to repent. Among the causes leading to loss of wealth natural disasters are predominant. Often natural disasters such as fires, floods, earthquakes and so on, affect not only single individuals, but also groups and multitudes collectively. If people remain unprepared to face such calamities, they would get shocked and confused. Similarly, one should anticipate other kinds of disasters. For example, thieves would take away the wealth; the government might confiscate one's wealth; or it might fall into the hands of those who are not dear. One should be ready for any such situation. To face such situations bravely and carry on one's work without any interruption, one should build and fortify one's material position and mental stability. The canonical texts suggest two measures, that should be adopted to face such eventualities. One is, what is referred to in the **Vyagghapajja Sutta**, as, **arakkha sampada**' ie. protective measures that are to be adopted before hand. And the other is to strengthen oneself so that one would not be bewildered in face of whatever calamity that is really inevitable.

### 3.90

What steps should be taken to adopt first of these two measures? It is seen that a farmer should, when preparing a field provide and maintain inlets for water as well as outlets to take away excess water. He should anticipate rain, and flooding of fields and then adopt all remedial measures possible beforehand. One who deals with highly inflammable equipments and materials should

be ready to face any contingency connected with fire. To prevent things being robbed, one should safely store them and provide security. Knowing very well that erecting any building on a street line is prohibited and entails penal measures by state authorities, one should abstain from doing such things. Knowing very well that defrauding and other corrupt practices are legally punishable offences, one should refrain from indulging in such activities. This is what is meant by '**arakkha sampada**'.

The other measure is to take necessary steps to face any calamity that would occur in spite of all remedial measures taken. One such measure is given in the **Sigalovada Sutta**, which advises an individual to deposit a fourth of his earnings, so that it could be used in times of difficulties. In the present society there are two main ways of making such deposits. One is saving and the other is insurance. There is, of course, another remedial step and that is to have a good circle of friends who would come to the rescue at difficult times.

### 3.91

The **Sigalovada Sutta** advises also to invest two portions of one's income in some profitable venture. Perhaps this advice is meant not to ordinary people, but to businessmen for Sigala, too, was a millionaire. However, it is clear that when enjoying one's wealth one should pay heed to all three aspects - investment, saving and insurance.

### 3.92

The **Rasiya** and other Suttas say that performance of meritorious deeds also is a necessary aspect in enjoyment of wealth. This has already been discussed (see chp. I, IV), and there it was shown how futile are Spiro's arguments to the contrary. Buddhism admits personality differences as well as faculty differences of individuals, and, hence, lays down a graduated training, a graduated course, a graduated practice; and it was shown how merit becomes important in the course of the samsaric existence of

an individual. In fact, merit, provides a motive to the individual in his socio-economic activities. It was also shown how 'taking refuge', observance of five precepts and other forms of conduct, which are part and parcel of active participation in socio-economic activities, turn into merit. Giving of labour and such other social service activities are explained in the **Vanaropa Sutta** as forms of 'merit'. The 'theory of surplus merit' introduced by Dr. A. T. Ariyaratna of the Sarvodaya movement is also important in this regard.<sup>158</sup> Performance of meritorious deeds as referred to in the **Pattakamma Sutta** gives only a limited meaning for therein it is concerned only with the attitude that should be shown by the laity towards religious men. In Buddhist societies main emphasis is on charity towards the monks. The importance of mutual relations between the monks and the laity has been already discussed. However in the **Pattakamma Sutta** not only Buddhist monks, but all religious men are considered as worthy of offering and patronage. This aspect of performance of meritorious deeds should be born in mind when enjoying one's wealth.

### 3.93

When the above evidence is taken into consideration there arises a grave problem. How many of us have the economic strength to comply with all the admonitions given in Buddhist texts? Besides looking after oneself and making oneself happy, there is a host of other duties to be discharged such as attending on parents, relatives, friends, visitors and even paying taxes and so on. How many would be really capable of discharging all these duties and obligations? Would not anyone who attempts to comply with all these be forced to run into debt? If one runs into debt, would not it be rather silly to expect him to save? Therefore, is not this whole system of enjoyment of wealth advocated in Buddhism impracticable? To answer this it is necessary to examine the Buddhist teaching on control of income and expenditure, and savings.

### 3.94

Buddhism speaks of a kind of happiness called (**Anana Sukha**) 'happiness of debtlessness' which is derived through the feeling that 'I am not in debt of anything to anybody'. This is well enunciated in the **Anana Sutta**.<sup>159</sup> the Buddhist view is that it is best to be free of all kinds of debts. Ven. Madihe Pannasiha thero<sup>160</sup> makes the following observations on this point.

"Obtaining money on credit (or loans) was prevalent even during the Buddha's time. Persons like Anathapindika were the bankers of the day. The Buddhist texts make references to instances where he gave loans both to the state as well as to ordinary people. However, Buddhism does not approve of excessive borrowing for, as the saying goes 'borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry' and the Buddha's advocacy of a life free from debts (**anana sukha**) as being conducive to the happiness of a layman supports this statement.

In the **Samaññaphala Sutta**, the Buddha compares the **Samaññaphala** (or fruit of recluse life) to the happiness derived by a person, who having been in debt frees himself of all his debts, and now supports his family and children from the savings he has managed to put aside. The importance of making savings from one's earnings is stressed in this manner".

The **Ina Sutta**<sup>161</sup> graphically describes the numerous problems and hardships that befall a man in debt. Yet, can an ordinary layman given to enjoyment of pleasures (**gihi kamabhogi**) lead a debtless life? Ven. Madihe Pannasiha<sup>162</sup> thera discussing about the Buddhist concept of progress says that the Buddha did not prevent people from borrowing, what he did was to admonish people not to make it a habit.

### 3.95

The Buddhist attitude towards borrowing money becomes further clear by analysing the **Samaññaplala Sutta**<sup>163</sup> account

related to it. The Sutta says, if a person takes a loan and starts some industry and if his industry becomes successful he would pay all his old debts. Whatever money that remains he would utilize to maintain his wife and family. Then this would occur to him. 'At the beginning I borrowed some money and started my industry. My industry became successful, and now I have paid up all my old debts, and I have some extra money remaining with me to maintain my wife and family. Thus he would feel happy on account of the fact that he is debt-free. From this simile it becomes clear that borrowing money is not an unusual happening. But, this simile contains within itself also the admonition that the money so borrowed should be properly invested and then with the profits that accrue from the investment one should as quickly as possible, pay up all debts and become debt-free. From this it is clear that money should be borrowed not for mere consumption but investment. It is the same idea that is expressed by the phrase 'nissaya sampañño' that is used in the **Vepulla Sutta**. From all this it is clear that Buddhism accepts that on occasions one would be forced to borrow money and that sometimes one would have to pay up the debt together with interest, and that such loans should be settled without much delay. If one borrows money for the purpose of consumption then he would find it difficult to settle the loans and, consequently, he would fall into dire hardships. Hence, it could be surmised that Buddhism does not approve raising loans for the purpose of consumption. This is why it is said that personal consumption should be in accordance with his personal income. If one is unable to repay, one would run into debts. The **Vasala Sutta**<sup>164</sup> says that a debtor who, when charged with non-payment of debts, runs away saying 'I did not borrow any money' is really a mean person, a *vasala*.

### 3.96

A person, who with his well earned money attends to all his needs as well as to the needs of his family members and others, discharges all his obligations, fulfills all his duties as a citizen,

invests in order to increase his wealth, saves in anticipation of difficult times and engages also in meritorious deeds, should always be mindful. If not, he would not be able to accomplish any of the above mentioned things. This is why the **Mahacattarisaka Sutta**<sup>165</sup> describes **Samma Sati** - right mindfulness as one of the factors that go along with **Samma Ajiva** - right livelihood. One has to strive hard to accomplish this, and this really is right effort'. This right-effort is specially seen in the attempt made to balance the income and expenditure. Those who fail in this attempt due to lack of right mindfulness either ruin themselves by wasting their wealth or suffer by saving every cent they have. It is with reference to such individuals that the **Anguttaranikaya**<sup>166</sup> says that there are two persons who cannot ever made to be content. One is he who deposits everything that he obtains, and the other is he who spends everything that he gets. This is why Prof. O. de A. Wijesekera<sup>167</sup> rightly observes that,

"An individual may righteously (dhammena) earn wealth and use it righteously, sharing it with others, but hoarding up food and wealth is condemned as strongly as squandering money".

The wasting of whatever one receives is considered in the **Parabhava Sutta**,<sup>168</sup> as a sign of decline. The **Vyagghapajja Sutta** while offering sound advice regarding the proper balancing of income and expenditure compares a well-to-do, but a miserly person to a person who dies of starvation, and a spendthrift to a fig-eating glutton, and points out that both are equally condemned by the world.

### 3.97

The Buddhist economic principle that deals with the proper balancing of income and expenditure is called 'balanced life' (*samajivikata*). The **Vyagghapajja Sutta**<sup>169</sup> very clearly explains this concept of balanced life.

The Sutta says that a householder who knows well about his income and expenditure leads a balanced life which is neither too

high nor too low, thinking 'my income does not exceed my expenditure and expenditure does not exceed my income'. It is further said that he balances his earnings and expenses just as one who holds scales (goldsmith) or his apprentice who knows on holding up the scales, that either by so much it has dipped down or by so much it has tilted up; even so a householder would know his income and expenditure and leads a well balanced life. This well balanced life is the economic principle advocated by the Buddha for success in household life.

3.98

From the above discussion what is quite obvious is that this economic principle cannot be properly implemented by resorting to a life given to indulgence in sensual pleasures. What is needed is a kind of strict restraint, but this should not be a forced restraint. It would be made clear that this restraint should come from a proper understanding of the process of consumption. Here it is relevant to consider what the Buddhist idea of thrift is. One example to illustrate this could be taken from the life of monks themselves.<sup>170</sup> This pertains to a discussion between Ven. Ananda and King Udena in which the former explains to the latter of the strict frugality followed by monks in using their robes.<sup>171</sup> The other incident is connected with the physician Jivaka and a female devotee. Jivaka, who observed a female devotee advising her servant to pick up a drop of ghee with a piece of cotton wool, becomes quite disgusted with her miserly behaviour. The female devotee who understood Jivaka's reaction explains to him the frugal attitude that should be cultivated by pleasure enjoying laymen. Later this very same female devotee treats Jivaka lavishly; and this behaviour of hers convinces Jivaka that she is not miserly as he thought her to be.<sup>172</sup> Commenting on these incidents Prof. Lily de Silva<sup>173</sup> says:

"While miserliness is held in contempt, frugality is extolled as a virtue. Wastefulness is a deplorable habit and it is even regarded as anti-social".

#### IV. THE PHILOSOPHY OF MATERIAL ENJOYMENT

3.99

There are a number of Suttas that contain advice regarding material enjoyment. The **Ariyawansa Sutta**<sup>174</sup> deals with the enjoyment of the four basic material requisites by the monks. Similarly, the two suttas namely, **Rasiya** and **Kamabhogi**<sup>175</sup> explains the philosophy behind the material enjoyment by the laity. All three above mentioned Suttas summarize this whole philosophy by a phrase containing five key words viz. **Agathito, amucchito, anajjhapañño, adinavadassavi, nissaranapanno paribhunjati**. What is significant is that this philosophy is basically common to both monks and laity. However, the **Ariyawansa Sutta** gives some additional information. While the **Nivapa Sutta** provides lengthy accounts regarding how monks should enjoy five sensual pleasures, the **Sabbasava Sutta** explains how they should enjoy the four basic requisites. It has already been pointed out that institution of the Sangha provides the laity with suggestions to form their own organization and their personal lives. As shown by Prof. Kalupahana the "fruitfulness" of these teachings needs to be understood in the light of particular groups of people who undertake to follow them. Hence, the advice offered to monks in this regard becomes conducive to regulate the material enjoyment of the laity. All these factors have to be taken into consideration when examining the Buddhist philosophy behind material enjoyment. What has been discussed so far are the Buddhist fundamentals pertaining to this. What is presented as the philosophy of material enjoyment is the understanding necessary either to reorganize the existing structural patterns or to build up new structures of material enjoyment based on those fundamentals in a way that accords with both time and clime and this is the task of the economic experts.

3.100

The **Nivapa Sutta** contains an anecdote about four herds of deer. Of these four herds three fall into a trap set up by a hunter,

and one group manages to escape from it and eat the grass. Using this as a simile the Sutta refers to four groups of monks, out of which three get ensnared by Mara, while the fourth group, though enjoying sensual pleasures, manages to avoid the Mara's snare. In explaining how this group of monks enjoyed sensual pleasures the Sutta<sup>176</sup> says the well restrained and mindful religious men knowing the sphere of Mara, knowing material pleasures as bait laid down by the Mara, enjoy them without getting ensnared by them, thus avoiding coming under the control of Mara.

In this advice meant for the monks, emphasis is laid on few things that should be well remembered when enjoying. These are (i) not to encroach into sensual pleasure (ii) not to get bewildered (iii) not to get infatuated by enjoyment (iv) not to become heedless (*te tattha ananupakhajja amucchita bhojanani bhunjamana na madam apajjimsu amatta samana nappamadam apajjimsu*)<sup>177</sup>.

### 3.101

What is meant by 'ananupakajjha' in the Nivapa Sutta, and 'gathita' in the Ariyawansa Sutta, Rasiya Sutta and Kamabhogi Sutta is the encroachment into sensual pleasures and enjoying them with much addiction to them. It means the enjoyment of wealth and other material possessions with deep attachment and engrossment. Such behaviour has been discarded by the Buddha as indulgence in sensual pleasures; and in the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta it is referred to as an extreme form of conduct which is vulgar, worldly, ignoble and harmful and hence, should be given up. Why has this been condemned in this drastic manner?

### 3.102

It is seen that when an individual is so engrossed in enjoyment of sensual pleasures he would inevitably exceed the limits, and such enjoyment could be described as 'excessive enjoyment' (*adhiparibhojana*). Excessive enjoyment of anything is harmful.

Even over-eating is so. The Kosala Samyutta narrates the inconvenience suffered by King Pasenadi Kosala and, how the Buddha advised him to regulate his food habits. The Buddha pointed out that the aches and pains of him who is mindful and knows the limit of eating will be less. Food digests easily and this protects his life.<sup>178</sup> Over eating creates digestive problems and leads to all sorts of ailments which reduces one's life span. It makes one drowsy and heavy, and consequently inactive, causing slackness in work.

### 3.103

Dr. H. N. S. Karunatilleke views over eating as a grave problem affecting the present society. He says: "There is good reason to believe that the developed countries must not only reduce their per capita food consumption but must also be more selective because in the developed countries with a few exceptions, deaths from diseases of the circulatory system now outnumber deaths from all other causes. Of the circulatory diseases, coronary heart disease is by far the most important. Coronary heart disease now kills even the comparatively young and poses serious human, social and economic problems. Heart disease can no longer be considered the disease of old age. Diet is known to play a major role in causing heart ailments. People in the affluent countries take in a lot of rich food and they consume too much of it. The statistical co-relation between the incidence of heart disease and affluence, which is expressed in terms of per capita income, is very high. The latter may be explained in terms of a number of factors. In addition to diet, the competition and stress, the pursuit of wealth, the large number of people engaged in mainly sedentary activities, together with certain features of social behaviour in affluent societies such as sex, drinking, smoking and the addiction to drugs, have significantly contributed to the overall picture."

### 3.104

The condition connoted by the term "gathita" (being fettered) is not limited to enjoyment of food and drinks. Addiction to women, liquor, gambling, wealth, smoking, power, hoarding goods, land and property and a host of such other things are all included.

### 3.105

There is another aspect of this which deserves consideration. When one appropriates for himself a major portion, what remains is not enough for others to share and this creates social conflict. The **Mahadukkhakhandha Sutta**<sup>180</sup> presents an elaborate description of this social conflict that arises due to excessive enjoyment of sensual pleasures. It graphically describes how this excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures causes kings to conflict with kings, members of different social groups to conflict with each other, parents to conflict with children, brothers and sisters are drawn into conflict. how these conflicting groups engage in verbal assault against each other; how they resort to use of weapons against each other; how they harm and kill each other. The Sutta emphatically points out the excessive indulgence in enjoyment of sensual pleasures as the primary cause of this disastrous conflict.

Ven. Nyanaponika<sup>181</sup> views the conflict in this manner. "There is the most suffering in the animal world where, "devouring each other is the law" (and men joining in it by even rearing animals for food); we also know of primitive man's fight for pasture land (which is basically the same as modern man's wars for "world markets")

### 3.106

Many Suttas in **Suttanipata** contain graphic descriptions of social conflicts caused in this manner. Thus the **Guhaththaka Sutta**<sup>182</sup> using very apt similes describes the hapless state of those who have become slaves of sense pleasure. They are compared to twitching and trembling fish in a dried up stream. The **Kalahavivada Sutta**<sup>183</sup> of the **Suttanipata** puts across this idea very effectively when it says

"affection breed the mass  
of bickering and strife,  
tears, grief, and selfishness,  
conceit, pride and calumny.

With selfishness there come  
all bickerings and strife,  
-which lead to calumny"

The **Kamasutta**<sup>184</sup> of the **suttanipata** is equally graphic in its description of the plight of him who is enslaved by sensual enjoyment.

"whose with boundless appetite desires fields, lands, or gold,  
herds, horses, women, and kinsfolk, him tumultuous desires  
(weak though they seem) o'ercome at last, they crush their  
victim. Hereon Ills come surging in, like waves that flood  
some wrecked ships crazy hold'

### 3.107

One who enjoys these objects with strong addiction begins to consider these objects very highly. The result of this is that he begins to measure and rank people according to what and how much they possess. Thus one who is conceited with his possessions tends to look down upon his own relatives who possess less, and **Parabhava Sutta**<sup>186</sup> mentions this as a cause leading to downfall. The **Ariyawamsa Sutta**<sup>186</sup> explains how such an attitude leads one always to bolster up one's own self and degrade others; **Padhana Sutta**<sup>186</sup> refers to this habit of praising oneself and condemning others as the armies of Mara. The **Nivapa Sutta**<sup>188</sup> says that one who eats without being mindful easily succumbs to the armies of Mara.

### 3.108

Wealth might cause an individual to become a liar. For example one who is greatly attached to wealth would give false evidence,<sup>189</sup> and this would lead to his own destruction. The **Mahachora Sutta**<sup>190</sup> of the **Anguttaranikaya** says that one who is excessively attached to material things will turn out to be a notorious robber who distributes wealth liberally, and he would, by such conduct, be able to cover up any corrupt practice of his. This sort of stinking behaviour is fairly common in the present society. One who

smuggles into the country some harmful contraband item could, by contributing to some social service project, appear as a pious devotee, but according to Buddhist ethical standards he is a big rogue. It is because indulgence in sensual pleasure is beset with such harmful effects that the Buddha advocates that one should enjoy one's wealth without getting unduly attached to it.

### 3.109

One who is attached gets confused and infatuated and this makes him unable to distinguish right from wrong. So he misunderstands his ideals and aims. The **Appaka Sutta**<sup>191</sup> explains this infatuation, by comparing such people who are infatuated by sensual pleasures to deer that fails to see traps laid by hunters. An equally graphic simile is used in the **Atthakarana Sutta**,<sup>192</sup> to explain the pathetic plight of such people.

### 3.110

According to the **Sabbasava Sutta**<sup>193</sup> clothes, food, shelter and medicine are man's basic requirements. Clothes are necessary to protect oneself from cold and heat, from flies and mosquitoes, wind and rain, to cover one's nakedness and so on. Food is for the sustenance of body for the sustenance of life, for stopping old age aches and pain, and preventing the arising of such new pains and aches, for being faultless, for comfort and for the promotion of the practice of noble life. Similarly, the purpose of a shelter is to protect one from inclement weather, from flies, mosquitoes, serpents, wind and sun and also for the purpose of seclusion. Medicine is to prevent diseases, and to promote health.

### 3.111

One who enjoys the basic necessities with much greed and attachment tends to forget the primary purpose of such enjoyment. The **Sabbasava Sutta** itself brings into focus how wrong views about enjoyment of these basic needs would arise. If one is to consider the purpose of partaking of food is for pastime, for

indulgence, to become beautiful, then one has lost sight of the real purpose of enjoying food. Here one should clearly bear in mind that the Buddha has not prohibited the use of fine clothes like silks and fragrant ingredients, like sandalwood paste etc. for the lay people. Similarly, enjoyment of dance music etc. is not allowed only for those who have undertaken to observe the eight precepts. So one should not hastily conclude that Buddhism is completely against all types of enjoyment.<sup>194</sup>

### 3.112

Prof. W. S. Karunaratne makes some penetrating observations on this point in an article entitled Beliefs and Needs.<sup>195</sup>

"The primary function of food and drink is to eliminate hunger and thirst. This however, is true only in a very qualified sense. It is truer to say that elimination of hunger and thirst is one among many consequences of taking food and drink. With some of us the most important consideration in regard to food is not its basic function of eliminating hunger but meeting acquired needs prompted by beliefs of many kinds. Some take food to beautify their figure, some to convey messages to others about their fastidious tastes, some to advertise their level of income, some to maintain prestige and status, some to prove their capacity for extravagance, some to prove their simplicity and so on.

### 3.113

Prof. Karunaratne himself cautions the readers about a possible misinterpretation of this. He says<sup>196</sup>

"The moral I wish to draw from this discussion is not to urge the reader to return to life of bare necessities. Cultural enrichment begins only after we have passed the level of bare subsistence. We cannot make a virtue out of poverty or regard wealth as an evil. What I have attempted to show is the correlation between needs and beliefs. The fewer the beliefs the fewer the needs. The fewer the needs the fewer the beliefs. Conversely where there are more beliefs there are more needs, and where there are more needs there are more beliefs. Once we forget the causal relation between needs

and beliefs we are inclined to regard beliefs as absolute. One with absolute beliefs is certain to be a victim of bigotry, intolerance and arrogance”.

### 3.114

When being infatuated and confused with enjoyment there is a possibility that the primary purpose of such enjoyment would recede to the background, and other secondary purposes might come into prominence. Such an instance is referred to in the **Pathama aputtaka Sutta**<sup>197</sup> which speaks of a millionaire who led an extremely miserly life neither dressing nor eating properly and finally dying heirless, resulting in all his wealth being vested in the state. Earning and hoarding wealth was the sole aim of this millionaire's life, and he was never able to properly utilize his wealth. This state can be called 'alienation'; in this situation one aspect of the personality becomes dominant and the individual comes totally under its control. Prof. Padmasiri de Silva's analysis of this condition is quite applicable to the case of the millionaire referred to above. He says: <sup>198</sup> “..... A person needs money to buy the pre-requisites and the necessities for a comfortable life. He starts collecting money for this purpose. Later he gets more interested in accumulating wealth, which turns out to be a dominating purpose. The need to find money is gradually converted into an excessive greed for wealth. When a limited aspect of one's personality dominates the individual and submerges all other facets, one becomes a slave to an excessive greed for something. ... In this sort of situation, as Fromm observes” His actions are not his own, while he is driven by forces which are separated from his self”.

### 3.115

On one occasion Ven. Ananda explained to the wandering ascetic Channa how a person who is dominated by craving, hatred and confusion is led to act for the ill-being of both his own self and others. When one comes under the domination of some kind of desire, one finds it extremely difficult to free oneself from that situation. He gets more and more infatuated and submerged in it,

and fails to realize that there are loftier ideas to be pursued. He misunderstands the purpose of enjoyment and consequently enjoyment makes a puppet out of him.

### 3.116

The **Sabbasava Sutta** shows that enjoyment has still a wider application. It is for the success of a holy, spiritual life (**brahma cariyānuggahaya**), for calm and tranquility of the mind (**patisaḥṣaṇa**), and for trouble - free healthy life (**abyapaṇṇa**). Those who are bewildered by enjoyment do not see these purposes of enjoyment and that is why unbewildered enjoyment is constantly emphasised in Buddhism.

### 3.117

The idea connoted by the term '**anajjhappa**' too is of much significance in this connection. **Ajjhappa** is to become thoroughly engrossed, to get overwhelmed, to get submerged. The commentary<sup>199</sup> explains the term as '**tanha anothaṇṇa** (**aparīyonaddha** (unable to rise up from craving, tied down by craving) Thus it connotes a state where an enjoyer of wealth finds it impossible to get away from enjoying. The **Nivāpa Sutta** says that in such a situation one falls into infatuation and heedlessness. Infatuation through enjoyment of pleasures, drugs, even power causes abnormality in man, which represents a very acute state of 'alienation'. Such addicts will sacrifice anything for the sake of enjoyment, for they fail to see the reality. Some becoming addicted to intoxicants and drugs live in their own world of hallucination, deaf and blind to all standards of ethics. Some, becoming thoroughly abnormal due to addiction to money, fail to recognize the purpose and utility of money. Some of them lead miserly lives, neither wearing nor eating properly. Others devote all their time to acquisition of money, either through good or bad means, and do everything possible to cover up their misdeeds by the power of money. Some of them go completely mad and some others lose their 'mental balance' and some even become murderers. It is a

difficult task to rehabilitate them. Some, of course, come back to normality with the help of psychiatrists, undergoing recuperation at rehabilitation centres. Yet some hardly stop short of falling into prisons, lunatic asylums, or even to gallows. There are many instances that show such 'addicts' resorting to suicide. This is why it is often emphasised in Buddhism that one should enjoy wealth knowing very well its possible evil consequences.

### 3.118

One, who through desire, enjoys his wealth all by himself, gets aloof from society and others shun him. He, through excessive enjoyment, would run into debt or fall sick and his death would be quickened. As he fails to see the ethical boundaries he would become abnormal and even a social menace. Loosing all human qualities, such people would turn into mere puppets manipulated by desire.

### 3.119

One who knows the evil consequences of excessive enjoyment of wealth would always engage in enjoyment with awareness, and be ready to give up when so required. Such knowledge is called **nissarana-pañña**, knowledge of escape. To have such knowledge one should understand the nature of existence as well as human nature. This is why right view should lead the way in the process of enjoyment. Therefore, in this context, it is necessary to examine briefly the Buddhist point of view regarding the nature of existence and man.

### 3.120

Once the Mara is said to have addressed the Buddha, residing close to Himalaya, thus:

"Oh, Blessed one you, who have developed your mind to such a high state that you could even turn this Himalaya mountain into a golden mountain, rule righteously". The Buddha

knowing the nature of the human mind answered that a man would not be satisfied even with a golden mountain double the size of Himalaya; and that the wise who understand this nature of the human mind conduct themselves properly.<sup>200</sup>

The **Dhammapada**<sup>201</sup> when it says that 'not by a shower of gold coins does contentment arise in enjoyment of pleasures' aptly explains this insatiable nature of the human mind. The **Ratthapala Sutta**<sup>202</sup> of the **Majjhimanikaya**, too, contain some insightful observations on this. In a conversation with the King of Koravya, Ratthapala therā says that the world is deficient, unsatisfied, and a slave of desire. He further explains how men overwhelmed by the desire engage in amassing wealth. Kings and all others, without their desires being fulfilled and being ever unsatiated, die. So there is no sensual satisfaction in this world.<sup>203</sup>

### 3.121

The inability to see this insatiability is considered in Buddhism as the human nature. Even the modern economists admit that human wants have no limits. Most of these wants are creations of the insatiable, desire-filled mind. Is this contentment to be found in the objects of senses themselves? If it is so then with an abundance of such objects contentment would be attainable. If this is the case one who possesses more and more of houses and properties, vehicles, money and such other things should be quite content. But, this is not so. When we examine the situation in affluent countries, it is seen that there is more discontentment, restlessness and unhappiness. Wide spread crime, physical and mental disorders, rape, murder all go to show the discontentment that pervades in the societies of affluent European countries and America. This becomes still obvious by the number of youth that seek ways and means of obtaining mental tranquility.

Thus, it is clear that contentment is not inherent in the objects of senses. Buddhist texts clearly demonstrate this. The **Dhammapada** stanza quoted above as well as the **Ratthapala Sutta** are evidence for this.

### 3.122

If contentment is not to be found in the objects of senses then the conclusion that is to be drawn is that their abandonment will give rise to contentment. But is such a conclusion right? Does abandonment of all objects of senses produce contentment? It is seen that this too does not work. The true Buddhist position is different. To understand why neither possession nor abandonment of sensual objects produce contentment, it is necessary to clarify another related problem.

### 3.123

There is a difference between sensual objects and sensual desires. Sensual desire is Kama. The things that rouses sensual desires are objects of sensual desires. Thus all objects that attract the five sense faculties are objects of sensual desires. That really is the world, for according to Buddhism the world is comprised of senses and their objects. Can any one possibly run away from all this, or abandon all this? Can any one possess all this? Both are impossibilities. Even if one were to possess all the pleasures, that will be of no avail for, he will not find contentment as contentment is not inherent in pleasures. The following stanza occurring in the Mara Samyutta<sup>204</sup> clearly explains the difference between sensual pleasures and objects of sense pleasures.

Sankapparago purisassa kamo  
ne te Kama yani citrani loke  
sankappa rago purisassa Kamo  
titthanti citrani tatheva loke  
Athettha dhira vinayanti chandam<sup>204</sup>

(The manifold objects in the world.  
This in itself is not desires of sense  
Lustful intention is man's sense-desire  
that manifold of objects doth endure  
The desire thereto the wise regulate)

All sense objects of form, sound, smell, taste, touch however, lovable, pleasurable, dear and appealing they may be, they are not really sensual pleasures. They are mere qualities of sensual pleasures. What we call sensual pleasure really is the conceptual attachment in man to these objects. Therefore in spite of the existence of these objects of senses a wise person controls one's mind.

### 3.124

According to the Buddhist analysis all these objects of senses as conditioned things are marked by the three characteristics of phenomena namely, impermanency, suffering and non-substantiality. These objects when they come into contact with sense organs, generate either 'like, dislike' or some neutral feeling. Towards what we like, we develop attachment, and towards what we dislike, we develop hatred. We begin to cling to, own, possess and continuously enjoy what we like. But we are unable to possess them forever for, they are ever changing. This creates unhappiness, and restlessness in us. Similarly contact with unpleasant objects itself generates displeasure, unhappiness and disturbances in us. Whatever the object is whether pleasurable or not, what we finally experience is displeasure, non-satisfaction, discontentment and suffering. Therefore, it is clearly seen that it is impossible to find pleasure in these objects of senses. Thus, craving, desire, sensual pleasure are all nothing other than insatiable mental states in us. When we truly become aware that we cannot become content or happy by amassing these objects and enjoying them, there would occur some sort of mental change, an attitudinal change in us with regard to these objects, that though goods are necessary merely to satisfy our needs, it is of no use amassing them. This brings about a restraint to our enjoyment of sensual pleasures. This sort of restraint is not something that we forcibly enforce on us, but something that begins to operate with the inner change that takes place through observing the true nature of phenomena. For this we need not be blind and deaf to these objects. The **Indriyabhavana Sutta**<sup>205</sup> very lucidly explains what

this inner change is. Herein the Buddha points out that if what restraint means is turning a blind eye or a deaf-ear to sense objects, then the blind and the deaf would be the most restrained ones in the world. What the Buddha means by restraint is an attitudinal change, an inner change that comes about through understanding the true nature of things. A similar explanation is found in the *Nibbedhika Sutta*.

### 3.125

It is seen that even an emancipated person can enjoy objects of senses without clinging on to them. Prof. Jotiya Dhirasekera draws our attention to the *Mahasaccaka Sutta*<sup>206</sup> and explains this fact. He says:

“Viewing the concept joy, comfort and happiness philosophically, the Buddha says that he sees no need to run away from them as long as they savour not of lustful attachment and unwholesome defiling traits”<sup>207</sup>

The emancipated are the Arahants who have properly comprehended the causal genesis of all phenomena, their impermanence, non-satisfactoriness and non-substantiality; and hence they are able to derive satisfaction from them without either clinging to them or getting defiled by them. One may not have full comprehension, the internalized realization of this true nature of things. Yet, it is possible to experience contentment and detached enjoyment in proportion to one's understanding of the true nature of things. The behavioural change in a person who has stepped into the spiritual path takes place gradually and this gradual change is explained in canonical texts. This is what is meant by restraint which is founded on knowledge leading to emancipation. Some of the characteristics of a restrained person, for example, are easy to support (*subharata*) few needs (*appicchata*), knowing the limits (*mattaññuta*), contentment (*santutthita*), whose needs are easily met (*sallahukata*) are referred to in the *Metta Sutta* of the *Suttanipata*.<sup>208</sup>

### 3.126

A person who could be easily supported (*subhara*) is one who is satisfied with having his basic needs fulfilled; one who is not intent on enjoying, with the desire to show-off, but willing to renunciate, as far as possible, his wants and regulate, with wisdom, his quality of being easily supported. For example, he would dress remembering well the basic purpose of dressing and not wear clothes either to imitate others or merely to display one's wealth. Thus, he would be able to renunciate such immature and unrestraint ways of conduct. This is what restraint means. Simplicity or having few needs is, in other words, giving up desire to hoard and training to limit one's enjoyment in the fulfillment of one's basic needs. A simple, unostentatious life is what is meant by *sallahukata*. Awareness of limits with regard to all aspects of life - whether it is food or clothes is what is denoted by *mattaññuta*. When one understands that discontentment is a characteristic of the ordinary, base worldling and that all objects of desire are subject to change, there takes place in him a change of attitude bringing about a change in one's conduct. The happiness that is caused by change of attitude and conduct is contentment (*santutthi*). In other words, this is the satisfaction that results from restraint arising through knowledge, associated with renunciation. There is nothing beyond this to be expected from enjoyment. The highest that could be expected from proper enjoyment is calmness, tranquility, and peace. Hence, contentment is said to be the highest wealth.<sup>209</sup>

### 3.127

Schumacher is one of those who grasped these fundamentals of the Buddhist concept of enjoyment and hence he says:

“While the materialist is mainly interested in goods, the Buddhist is mainly interested in liberation. But Buddhism is ‘The Middle Way’ and therefore in no way antagonistic to physical well-being. It is not wealth that stands in the way of liberation but the attachment to wealth, not the enjoyment of pleasurable things but the craving for them. The keynote of Buddhist economics,

therefore, is simplicity and non-violence. From the economist's point of view, the marvel of the Buddhist way of life is the utter rationality of its pattern-amazingly small means leading to extra-ordinarily satisfactory results.

For the modern economist this is very difficult to understand. He is used to measuring the 'standard of living' by the amount of annual consumption, assuming all the time that a man who consumes more is 'better off' than a man who consumes less. A Buddhist economist would consider this approach excessively irrational. Since consumption is merely a means to human well-being, the aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption. The ownership and the consumption of goods is a means to an end, and Buddhist economics is the systematic study of how to attain the given ends with the minimum means."

### 3.128

Concepts denoted by terms such as **Subharata**, **appicchata**, **sallahukavutti**, **santutthita** etc., have often been misrepresented and misinterpreted. Sometimes all fundamentals of Buddhist economics are being misinterpreted. Consequently some even dare to argue that Buddhist economic philosophy has no relevance whatsoever to the present day economics. Therefore it is an area that needs examination and clarification.

### 3.129

The **Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics** explains Buddhist contentment as 'merely a fatalistic, joyless acceptance of things as they are. Further it is said that the ideal of contentment proclaimed by Buddhism is remote from life.<sup>211</sup> Prof. S. Tachibana<sup>212</sup> in his well-known book **The Ethics of Buddhism** makes the following observation as contentment:

"contentment is the mental condition of a person who is satisfied with what he possesses or obtains or with the position in which he finds himself. He could possess or obtain more, but he does not desire to have more than he has or gets, he may improve

his position, social or professional through some medium which lies in his power, but he declines to do so."

This view of Tachibana 'has been rightly questioned in **Encyclopaedia of Buddhism**.

Whether such definitions of 'contentment' agree with the Buddha's teaching, and what the impact of such definitions on modern economics is, are two questions that deserve our attention. Dr. Ananda Guruge<sup>213</sup> makes some insightful observation on both these questions. He says:

"Here the Buddhists have an initial attitudinal obstacle to overcome. Is it the general apathy and indolence which makes the average Buddhist less enthusiastic about economic competition and material gain or is it an attitude generated and promoted by the Buddhist emphasis on contentment, non-attachment and renunciation? It is explained by some that Buddhism promoted and justifies poverty, or at least is a disincentive to development as generally conceived. All that is needed to counteract this charge against Buddhism would be to analyse the religious affiliations of most poverty-stricken communities of the world..."

### 3.130

'Appicchata' for the Arahant could mean total renunciation. Yet, for others who are on lower stages of the path this cannot be so strictly applied. For the laity this is still different. The overlooking of this distinction that exists among those who are in different stages of spiritual development is the biggest blunder made by the critics and commentators of Buddhism and Buddhist economic philosophy.

### 3.131

From what we have so far learned from Suttas such as **Sigalovada**, **Rasiya**, **Kamabhōgi**, **Pattakamma**, **Vyagghapajja** and **Anana** the pattern of enjoyment followed by the laity is fairly clear. From these sources it becomes clear that a person who is

engaged in enjoying what he has earned righteously owes a responsibility for himself as well as for those who are related to him in different degrees. His responsibilities to the family, society, religion and even to the state were discussed earlier. It was shown that a progressive person would be concerned about both his material and spiritual progress for, if he is devoted to only one, then he would be like a one-eyed person. By examining Suttas such as **Cakka**, **Kula** and **Janasandhanusasana** we have been able to find out numerous ways of increasing our wealth. None of these sources even suggest that Buddhism advocates a doctrine which says that a person should merely remain content with whatever he has and should not strive or develop his potential. What is advocated in Buddhism is just the opposite of this. One is admonished to seek progress, both in material and spiritual spheres, to develop one's potentials; to understand that poverty is a basic cause of suffering and to overcome poverty, and finally to bring about a total progress - both material and spiritual of oneself. This exactly is the motivation provided by Buddhism.

### 3.132

Dr. Soni explaining the **Maha Mangala Sutta** presents a correct view of contentment. According to his explanation contentment is the attitude of equanimity one adopts in situations of fluctuating fortunes. Following is Dr. Soni's observation:<sup>214</sup>

"**Santutthi** is contentment. This implies acceptance of conditions and situations as they arise, with equanimity and without grumbling. This is a quality which bhikkhus must have as the commentary emphasizes when it does not mention lay people at all here. This is a much needed quality in these parts of the world and among these families where there is affluence. Contentment spells peace of mind for the person who has it for craving more and more spells out the opposite, of what would one be content with when he has enough clothes, enough food, enough living room and enough medicines. But then what is enough and what is excess? 'Enough' gives one little trouble to keep and maintain but more than that brings anxiety and worry. This blessing should also

not be misunderstood as counsel not to make an effort in life. Bhikkhus do not have to possess many things for happiness in their life, but lay people need much more. Lay people must make an effort to obtain what is necessary for a happy life free from poverty and starvation. Every one has to decide for themselves whether possessions will bring more happiness or more trouble. Being able to know this clearly is an aspect of wisdom."

### 3.133

The Buddhist teaching on contentment will be a valuable panacea, specially insatiability of craving is the nature, of man, that impermanency of everything that is dear and near is the nature of all phenomena; that clinging to these impermanent objects intensify suffering. This will enable them to be without grasping through the desire the objects of senses; but to enjoy them, knowing very well that they are dependently arisen; this will enable the discontented world to be unperturbed and happy while contentedly enjoying the requisites.

To him who understands the causally dependent nature of the social structure, it will be apparent that in this limited world there cannot be unlimited progress. Under such circumstances the transgression of the limits by one would amount to the exploitation of another. From the emphasis laid on distribution and performance of meritorious deeds it is seen that scrupulousness should be cultivated not only with regard to production, but also with regard to enjoyment.

### 3.134

The Buddhist philosophy of enjoyment which says that one should engage in enjoyment knowing well that he would have to renunciate them, is suggestive of the fact that enjoyment is not the end itself, but that there is a further goal. Human activities do not have enjoyment as its ultimate goal. Once enjoyment is complete, man is led to a higher goal beyond enjoyment. In this context, the capitalist ideal which measures progress on the basis of the quantity of enjoyment comes directly into conflict with the

Buddhist attitude. Progress, success, superiority and inferiority are to be measured by qualities which are far above mere enjoyment. What are these human qualities, to the attainment of which Buddhism shows the way?

In a consumer oriented society enjoyment of wealth, land and property, hoarding of goods become the pre-occupation of everyone, and no one will hesitate to employ whatever means available to pile up wealth. However, a Buddhist who realizes that these objects of enjoyment by themselves are not capable of providing any satisfaction, will only think of acquiring these material goods only to the extent that he needs them. Realizing exactly what contentment is, he effortlessly becomes content. That contentment itself is a quality that is far above mere enjoyment, and hence it becomes his greatest wealth (**santutthi, paramam dhanam**). Though this is what is aimed at by everyone who is engaged in enjoyment, it eludes most of them as they misconceive that contentment is obtained through sheer hoarding. Thus contentment (**santutthi**) becomes the portal to immeasurable, invaluable treasure the person who has stopped his chase behind hoarding; to enjoy this a vast treasure a majority, who are restlessly engaged in hoarding wealth, will find no access.

### 3.135

Before inquiring further into this 'noble wealth', there are two other factors that should be properly understood. Of these, one is the Buddhist view that 'wealth is not the end but only a means', and the other is that, one should not wait till one reaches complete economic stability to obtain this 'noble wealth' of contentment.

The Buddha after explaining the three kinds of material happiness namely, **atthi sukha, bhoga sukha and anana sukha** proceeds to explain the fourth, **anavajja sukha**. He says that the first three kinds of happinesses do not worth even one-sixteenth of this fourth kind of happiness<sup>215</sup>

What is meant by '**anavajja-sukha**' is happiness derived through faultless physical, verbal and mental behaviour. This also makes

clear how economic wealth is geared towards spiritual wealth. Further, it also becomes evident that, as faultless physical, verbal and mental conduct are essentially related to righteous production as well as righteous enjoyment, **anavajja sukha** should be given thought to not after reaching economic security, but while in the process of preparing one's economic foundation. This has already been made clear while discussing about the 'two-eyed person' and related concepts. The **Sabbasava Sutta** explaining how one should enjoy ones food and shelter also emphasises that enjoyment of wealth is only a means to a goal; it says that so is medicine. All these make clear that enjoyment does not merely stop at 'enjoying' but reaches a superior goal.

### 3.136

As the Buddha says that the other three kinds of material happinesses are not worth one-sixteenth of '**anavajja-sukha**', one may argue that the Buddha is rejecting material happiness and acknowledging only spiritual happiness. However, such an argument will not hold good in the face of the fact that the Buddha enumerates four kinds of material happiness for the laity that **atthi-sukha, bhoga sukha and anana-sukha** besides **anavajja sukha**. The Buddha very clearly accepts economic wealth as a source of happiness for the laity.<sup>216</sup> Further he mentions poverty as a cause of suffering for the pleasure seeking lay people, and he even admonishes people to earn wealth, when they are young enough to do so.

### 3.137

However, he also points out the fleeting nature of this wealth and enumerates various ways through which this wealth could perish. He enumerates seven other kinds of wealth which are imperishable. In the **Sakkya Sutta**<sup>217</sup> of the **Anguttaranikaya**, the Buddha after praising the righteously acquired wealth, shows how empty they are when considered in the ultimate sense. Hence, he admonishes disciples to get inclined to the attainment of four spiritual stages.

Thus wealth, according to Buddhism, is not an end, but only a means leading to a superior goal.

3.138

Faith (**saddha**), morality (**sila**), moral shame and moral fear (**hiri-ottappa**), learning (**suta**), charity (**caga**), wisdom (**pañña**) are said to be the seven kinds of 'noble wealth', and a man or a woman endowed with these is considered 'very wealthy'.<sup>218</sup> (On their face value these appear as psychological factors and, hence, quite often these are so explained. However, they could be interpreted in a worldly, a somewhat materialistic sense. As shown by Prof. Wijesekara<sup>219</sup> it is moral conduct that forms the foundation not only of spiritual progress but also progress in worldly affairs. The **Sila Sutta**<sup>220</sup> also supports such a view for, it says that virtuous persons through heedfulness obtain a lot of wealth. Ven. Madihe Pannasiha Nayaka Thero<sup>221</sup> too, shows how morality becomes conducive to material progress. He explains particularly how addiction to liquor brings about material decline.

3.139

Addiction to liquor not only brings about economic downfall, but also leads to many other problems, corruption and forms of misconduct. What is basically meant by practising morality is the observation of the five precepts. Ven. Madihe Pannasiha elaborately deals with the adverse effects that is caused by the non-observation of the fifth precept. The breaking of the other four precepts too leads to economic and material decline. Whether in a Buddhist or in a non-Buddhist society such conduct in the economic sphere, though it is not particularly called 'morality', is nothing other than morality or **sila** referred to in Buddhism. This is restraint in physical, verbal and mental behaviour, and it means abstention from cheating, defrauding, lying, stealing, wasting and all other corrupt practices. This is how morality comes to be treated as a kind of wealth in the worldly sense. The **Sila Sutta**<sup>222</sup> explains the value of **sila** as a spiritual and supramundane wealth.

## Chapter 4

# STATE BASED ECONOMIC PLANNING

## I. THE NECESSITY OF A STATE ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

### 4.1

It has been suggested that the **Aggañña Sutta** could be better understood by reading it along with the **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta** and the **Kutadanta Sutta**.<sup>1</sup> Distribution of wealth among the poor (**adhana**) is a duty included in the set of norms that are to be followed by a Universal Monarch - a **Cakkavatti-raja** as he is designated in canonical texts.<sup>2</sup> If taken in the literal sense '**adhana**' means the poor. Another duty of a **Cakkavatti-raja** is the provision of 'ward, care and protection' (**rakkhavarānagutti**)<sup>3</sup> for various categories of people in the country. However, whether this refers to the preparation of the economic foundation is not quite clear. When it is said that the **Cakkavatti-raja** should provide wealth for those who 'have not', that of course, is certainly an acceptance of the fact that the state is duty bound to inquire into the economic condition of the people. However, some may argue that this particular reference means that the **Cakkavatti-raja** (i.e. the state) should be concerned only about a particular section of the society (i.e. the poor) or consider the subjects individually. To understand the significance of this statement it is necessary to examine the narrative concerning the eighth Universal Monarch referred to in the **Sutta**.

A brief summary of this narrative is as follows:

Dalhanemi was the Seventh Universal Monarch. He hands over the Kingdom to his eldest son, advises him regarding the conducting of the affairs of the State<sup>4</sup> and enters the forest to lead the life of a recluse. Just seven days after his renunciation of the Universal Kingship the Divine Wheel (i.e. the symbol of authority) disappeared. The newly consecrated Eighth Universal Monarch was displeased with this. He did not go to the royal sage (i.e. his father who is now a sage) and enquire about the norms to be observed by a Universal Monarch. Instead he governed according to his own wish. The result was that, unlike during the rulership of other Universal Monarchs, the country did not prosper under his rulership.

Then his council of advisors requested him to consult the council members regarding the cakkavatti-norms. The King assembled the competent advisory board consulted them and provided the subjects ward, care and protection as required by the cakkavatti - norms. However, he failed to give wealth to those who had no wealth.<sup>6</sup> This increased poverty,<sup>7</sup> and consequently led to numerous deeds of corruption in the society.

When poverty increased one person stealthily took something that did not belong to him. People caught him and produced him before the king and reported his offence. When questioned by the King the offender admitted what he did and told the King that he did so because he had no means to live. The King hearing this gave that person money and admonished him to lead a better life utilizing that money to maintain himself along with his family, and discharging whatever other duties he has to discharge. When another man was brought before him for committing the same offence, the King treated him likewise. The news spread that the king is giving money to those who steal, and this induced many to engage in stealing. When the King found that his generosity has contributed to stealing he decided to deal with the offenders very sternly. Wishing to put an end to this corrupt practice the King ordered the offenders to be beheaded.

Those who were engaged in thievery, too, deciding to react appropriately resorted to the use of weapons to kill those from whom they steal. Thus, simple thievery turned into plundering villages and towns, way-laying and massacre of people.

The Buddha analyses the sequential development of these events and explains their causal relations; how through non provision of wealth to the poor poverty becomes rampant; from poverty being rampant stealing becomes widespread, and how these corrupt acts lead to killing, lying, slander and so on, till finally all filial and religious piety is lost. Among such people how enmity, ill-will, animosity, passionate thoughts and promiscuity arise, finally leading the whole society to moral and physical degeneration and self-destruction through violence.<sup>8</sup>

## 4.3

In this narration of events which is more or less in the form of a mythological tale, what deserves consideration is the attitude adopted by the ruler towards the persons who engaged in thievery. The ruler considered such behaviour not as a social problem, but as individual instances of misbehaviour. Therefore, he thought that he could prevent such behaviour by helping them individually. The result was just the opposite of what he expected; stealing increased. A problem that started with a particular individual then turned into an acute social problem creating in its wake numerous economic and political upheavals. The causal relation underlying the whole process is very clearly demonstrated. In fact, the language used, the grammar and syntax employed very clearly demonstrate the causal origin of the events.<sup>9</sup> The whole episode makes it clear that from the Buddhist perspective this attempt to solve economic problems on an individual basis is not the correct method. The proper approach would be to examine the causes of poverty and remedy them. Ven. Prof. Henpitagedara Nanavasa thero analysing both the **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta** and the **Kutadanta Sutta** shows that the attempt to solve economic problems on an individual basis is merely a patch-work solution, and that such remedial measure only contributed to aggravate the problem.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.4

Dr. Chandima Wijebandara<sup>11</sup> commenting on the **Kutadanta Sutta** says that this Sutta very emphatically demonstrates that development has to be well organized and planned. Further, he discusses how this Sutta describes the planned constructive action taken by the state when the poor resorted to antigovernmental activities. He also shows how this Sutta describes the success of the State-based economic planning which contributed not only to the material progress of the people, but also to the progress of their moral and ethical values. Just like the **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta**, **Kutadanta Sutta** too is in the form of a mythological narrative. It narrates the story of an ancient King called Mahavijita who being extremely happy about his material prosperity, desires to perform a great sacrifice to the gods whom he thinks blessed him with all success and prosperity.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4.5

Desiring so he requests his chaplain to advice on this. Though the King was prosperous the country as a whole at the time was beset with numerous problems and unrest. The Sutta tells how the wise adviser to the King enlightens the King about the real situation in the country. His words of advice are quite noteworthy. He says:

'The Kings' country is harassed and harried. There are dacoits who pillage the villages and townships, and who make roads unsafe for travelling. If the King, so long as the state of the country is so, is to levy new taxes, certainly then your majesty will be acting improperly. Perhaps you might think thus, 'I will soon put a stop to these scoundrels' game by degradation and banishment, and fines and bonds and death'. But their licence cannot be put a stop to in this manner. Those who are left unpunished would still continue to harass the Kingdom. However, there is one method to adopt to end this robber menace. Who so ever, there be in the King's realm who devote themselves to keeping cattle and the farm, to them

let his majesty give food and seed-corn. Who so ever there be in Kings realm who devote themselves to trade, to them let his majesty the King give capital. Who so ever there be in the King's realm who devote themselves to government service to them let his majesty give wages and food. Then those men following each his own business, will no longer harass the realm. The King's revenue will go up, the country will be peaceful.

The narrative goes on to say that the King followed the chaplain's advice and managed to put an end to the problems in his realm.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4.6

The whole narrative shows how unplanned remedial measures carried out according to the whims and fancies of the state to solve economic problems have further complicated matters. It shows how the situation gets worsened when people, who are oppressed, resort to violence. The **Kutadanta Sutta** analyses this situation from a Buddhist perspective and presents appropriate remedies. It shows how important it is for those in authority to heed expert advice without acting in an autocratic manner and adopting **ad hoc** measures to solve national problems. Ven. Prof. Kamburupitiya Ariyasena therā<sup>14</sup> makes the following observation on the Sutta.

"The central theme of the **Kutadanta Sutta** is the explanation to the King of how he could put a stop to the power of **dassukhila**s who were the main source of trouble in the country. As a solution to the problem and to maintain security in the country, the chaplain proposed to the King the formation of an organization (**samvidhana**) or policy or plan, which would enable the King to eradicate the **dassukhila**s (the proletariat) instead of the use of **danda** or punishment."

#### 4.7

By analysing the statements attributed to both the King and the chaplain it is seen that the solution evolved was not aimed at

solving some isolated economic problems, but aimed at solving the whole economic situation by presenting a very comprehensive plan. What was meant by the formation (samvidhana) of an organization of policy or plan', is the formulation of a suitable state economic policy or plan. Not only was such a plan formulated, it was put into practice and that was the reason for its success in completely eradicating the "robber-menace".

#### 4.8

In order to understand the nature of this organization (samvidhana) it is necessary to examine what exactly is meant by 'dassukhila samugghata'. This latter term has generally, been rendered into Sinhala as 'sorahaula', which conveys the idea of a band of thieves.<sup>15</sup> It is rendered into English as "bandit", which is fairly close to the above sinhala term.<sup>16</sup> Ven. Buddhadatta in his Pali-Sinhala Dictionary<sup>17</sup> also rendered the Pali terms 'dassu' to mean thief, bandit, and 'khila' to mean a post, a hook, a short spear like object. However, Ven. Prof. K. Ariyasena<sup>18</sup> there says that such a rendering of the term devalues the meaning it had conveyed in ancient Indian culture. The original inhabitants of India who were conquered and enslaved were called 'dasyu' by the Aryas. The word 'dasa' in Pali (Skt *dasa*) is a derivative of *dasyu*.<sup>19</sup> Thus those who engaged in hard labour were also called 'dasyu'. The term 'khila' means a post denoting stability and the combined term 'dassu-khila' would connote the strength of the working class, the poor oppressed people. Hence Ven. Prof. Ariyasena Thera<sup>20</sup> considers the word 'proletariat' as a suitable translation in modern parlance.

Another learned monk suggests a somewhat different meaning. He too agrees that 'dassu' (dasyu) refers to the original inhabitants and 'khila' means a post. He, however, takes 'khila' to denote immobility, inactivity. Based on this, he suggests that 'dassukhila' could mean stoppage of all labour or work in the field of production, which led to the whole uprising and struggle.<sup>21</sup>

#### 4.9

In the *Kutadanta Sutta* the word 'dassukhila' is used not to denote individual thieves, but to denote bands of bandits who resorted to thievery as they had no other means of livelihood. Their labour was not fruitfully employed and both survival and security were problems for them. Thus they were forced to break the traditions of the civilized society. It is to indicate this antisocial state of affairs that prevailed that the term 'dussukhila' was used. Thus, it is seen that it connotes a much wider and significant meaning than a mere 'band of thieves'. The ideas of poverty, unemployment, insecurity, frustration neglect by the state, the anger caused by the feeling that the state is indifferent to the suffering of people, the desire for survival and the consequent taking up of arms, organizing themselves to break social norms and so on are all capsuled in the term 'dassukhila'. Thus, the Kings attempt to eradicate this 'dassukhila' does not have the limited meaning of destroying a 'band of bandits'. It connotes the idea of evolving a plan, programme to solve the economic problem in totality.

#### 4.10

The *Cakkavattisihanada Sutta* and the *Kutadanta Sutta* illustrate the two different approaches adopted by two kingdoms that were facing almost similar chaotic conditions. The above discussion showed how one ruler pushed the country to further chaos by his short sighted remedial measures. This Eighth King of the Dalhanemi dynasty brought ruin to his country because he did not rely on the advice of his counsellors, treated the problems individually and severally without adopting any planned remedial measures, resorted to the use of punishment and showed scant respect for the lives of the subjects. But King Mahavijita adopted a different approach; he accepted good advice in time, realized the real gravity of the situation and treated the problem in its totality by implementing a very methodical and a comprehensive plan to alleviate the problem of poverty that plagued the country. Buddhism rejects the approach adopted by the King referred to in

the **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta** and approves the approach adopted by the king referred to in the **Kutadanta Sutta**.

#### 4.11

The **Aggañña Sutta** shows how certain subjective weaknesses of individuals adversely affect the social institutions. It also demonstrates how such conditions in the society necessitated the setting up of a common administration. Two of the human weaknesses that adversely affected social institutions, according to the **Aggañña Sutta**, are laziness and excessive greed. During the primitive stage when resources were available in plenty the people enjoyed them collectively. However, one individual through laziness started hoarding goods and others soon followed suit. This led to hoarding and consequent scarcity of resources.<sup>22</sup> This sort of mean behaviour on the part of people affected nature, and the growth of crops got reduced and the plants got stunted causing a drastic reduction in the produce.<sup>23</sup> This problem, which at the beginning affected only a few, soon became a social problem prompting people to assemble and discuss the remedial measures that should be adopted. The remedy on which they decided was to divide the fields and set up boundaries.<sup>24</sup> In other words what they decided on was to adopt a system of private ownership. Thus, it is seen that the laziness in the individuals brought about changes in the environment, reshaped the interpersonal relations and paved the way for a new social institution namely, private ownership. Thus a personal problem turned into a common problem that necessitated a social contract to solve it. This is the first piece of vital evidence found in this sutta which suggests that the economy should come under the influence of a social institution which is well planned and organized.

#### 4.12

Subsequent events show how excessive greed on the part of individuals brought about a revolution in other social institutions. With the commencement of private ownership, the people, being overwhelmed by selfish feelings such as 'this is mine, 'this is not

mine', got tempted, through excessive greed, to protect their own shares and steal from the shares allocated to others. It was shown how this stealing led to numerous other social problems. Problems that never existed when the system of collective ownership prevailed, arose, increased and spread widely when private ownership and hoarding became prevalent.<sup>25</sup> This necessitated the appointment of a person, selected by common consent to dispense justice and maintain law and order in the society; this newly established social institution later developed and became the State.

#### 4.13

Exploitation which is a result of excessive greed is a manifestation of discontentment. Both human labour and nature become subject to exploitation by the discontented individuals. Discontentment is man's nature, and when the opportunity is available he tends to exploit in numerous ways. He would tend to exploit labour by making workers over-work, assigning them work without considering their capability, physical strength, age or sex; under pay them, not provide them any medical facility and so on. Economic experts have shown that most of the labour problems and unrest are due to such exploitations.<sup>26</sup> Labour problems and unrest lead to conflict, killing, stoppage of production and to consequent chaos in peoples day to day life. It is because of the prevalence of exploitation and such, other malpractices that the establishment of social institutions which have the power to investigate, control and organize the economic activities become necessary. It is for this very same reason that even State intervention, too becomes necessary.

#### 4.14

When human labour is being exploited there arise all sorts of protests and conflicts. But, nature remains dumb and silent even when being ruthlessly exploited and this deafening silence itself fix the fate of mankind. Earth has only limited resources. Land is extremely limited so are the resources that help energy and power generation. Therefore, if man is to inhabit the earth any longer

exploitation of nature has to stop. This is why Buddhism says that man and nature should develop a good rapport, just as it is between the honey sucking bee and the flower. Thus it becomes clear from Buddhist teachings that setting up of limits to enjoyment, regulation of the ways of enjoyment, prevention of exploitation of environment and prevention of utter work are all not mere duties of one individual, but duties incumbent upon the whole nation, and in fact upon the state.

#### 4.15

The concept of profit - making is another manifestation of excessive greed. It has already been shown how the society would be adversely affected if profit-making operates in a harmful manner. Under such circumstances some kind of control becomes quite necessary to protect the masses from selfish persons. Masses could be fleeced through the use of communication to spread falsehood. They could be cheated with the balance and the measure. Bribing and fixing of high rates of interests are also forms of exploitation and fleecing the masses. Tempting consumers to immitate and compete with others, creating artificial scarcities enticing consumers to buy and stock more are some of the subtle and ruthless methods used in the present to fleece the masses. According to Buddhism it is the duty of the state to protect the masses from such malpractices.

#### 4.16

The **Aggañña Sutta** very clearly demonstrates that private ownership greatly contributed to the decline of social ethics. It was shown how the Buddha introduced to the world a sort of a communist society, known as the Sangha Society, which practised collective ownership, except with regard to a few basic needs as the robe and bowl. It has already been shown that the Sangha institution as well as the rules governing that institution suggest the possibility of using them when the lay people are organizing their lay social institution. The possibility of setting up an economic institution which would open the way to collective

ownership than to private ownership which develops egoistic feelings in individuals, becomes more meaningful in Buddhist teachings.

#### 4.17

The canonical texts describe how man is made the hapless object of vicissitudes of life.<sup>27</sup> As man cannot, at times, successfully face these vicissitudes, either severally or collectively, there should be some state organization to launch well planned remedial measures against them. Buddhist teachings suggests that it is the responsibility of the state not only to make amends after occurances of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, droughts and so on, but also to take preventive measures before their occurrence and further to take steps that enable the people to withstand the onslaught of such natural disasters.

Man is also not in a position to solve such man-made contemporary problems as ethnic conflicts, wars, population explosion, insecurity of life and caste and creed related issues. All these issues have a great impact on the economy, too. It's futile to expect these problems to be solved by the effort of a single individual.

#### 4.18

In this regard individual differences that are so much emphasised in Buddhism deserve due consideration. Buddhist canonical teaching says that no two individuals are alike. Individuals differ from each other due to their former Kamma, sansaric continuity, physical and social environment, strength of their faculties as well as due to physical and mental make up.<sup>28</sup> Therefore it is held that there should be a state sponsored programme that is capable of tapping individual potential as well as of maximizing such potential in them.

#### 4.19

An examination of such suttas as the **Cakkavatti-sihanada**, **Kutadanta** and **Aggañña** as well as inherent weaknesses in

individuals clearly prompts the conclusion that Buddhism accepts the necessity of a state centered economic plan. The following is the summary of reasons that lead to such a conclusion.

- (i) An attempt to solve the economic problems on an individual basis merely increases the complexity of the problems. Economic problems should be treated and solved in their totality.
- (ii) As unemployment leads to unrest, it is the responsibility of the state to provide employment.
- (iii) The state is duty bound to guarantee the provision of basic needs of all.
- (iv) There should be equal distribution of goods and wealth.
- (v) As private ownership can lead to the disruption of social ethics, attempts should be made to create a society which is more inclined towards collective ownership and more concerned about social well being.
- (vi) As laziness leads to a fall in production and consequent problems, it is necessary to have a dynamic organization capable of stimulating and inspiring the people.
- (vii) As wanton greed leads to conflict, it is necessary to overcome such conflicts and create an environment where all could live in peace and harmony.
- (viii) Exploitation and corruption should be eradicated.
- (ix) As natural resources are limited, their use should be systematized and controlled. Waste and destruction should be stopped, conservation should be encouraged.
- (x) There should be a state sponsored programme of action to save people from ill-effects of vicissitudes of life.
- (xi) It is the responsibility of the state to find remedial measures for man-made contemporary problems.
- (xii) There should be a well organized programme to make the maximum use of individuals' potential as well as to develop their skills and personalities.

## II. THE FUNDAMENTAL FEATURES OF A STATE SPONSORED ECONOMIC ORGANISATION

4.20

In this regard there are two passages in **Kutadanta Sutta** which deserves special attention. One of these has already been referred to in section 4.5 <sup>29</sup> Prof. Trevor Ling <sup>30</sup> commenting on this passage says:

"The organisation of economic affairs is regarded as the responsibility of the political ruler, in the societies of India reflected in the Pali texts which was the King. Possible causes of economic inequity and discontent were to be removed by the ruler, in whose power it was to do so. In the Buddhist view; adequate wages and food supplies should be granted and full employment should be maintained. Such matters as these are dealt with in the **Kutadanta, Sutta** of the **Digha Nikaya** collection".

It appears from the above quote that Prof. Ling considers that the relevant passage from the **Kutadanta Sutta** lays stress on three responsibilities of the state.

- i. removal of economic inequalities and discontentment
- ii. provision of adequate wages and food supplies, and
- iii. provision of full employment

4.21

Ven. Prof. Kamburupitiya Ariyasena<sup>31</sup> makes the following observation on the same passage.

"According to the **Kutadanta Sutta**, the plan proposed and implemented was as follows:

1. Those who are enthusiastic and are concerned with the economic activities of production, specially the agriculturists should be provided with seeds, manure, cattle and the necessary agricultural implements.
2. Secondly, the trading section of the society should be provided with essential capital by the King or the state, in

order that it may remain controlled, and consequently desist from commercial misbehaviour.

3. Finally, the employees of the state who are keen on their work should be suitably rewarded, so that they may be prevented from indulging in malpractices.

According to the Sutta this plan which was intended for the elimination of **dassukhila**, was successful without resort to any kind of punishment. People engaged themselves in their own works and became prosperous, and a large amount of wealth was accumulated in the royal treasury. Thus, the economic plan propounded in the **Kutadanta Sutta** emphasises the necessity of the combination of individual initiative and encouragement together with the suppression and control of the state for the real well-being of the people safeguarding their personal freedom and social justice”.

#### 4.22

Evidence from the Tripitaka as well as scholars' opinion all go to show that the primary factor related to state responsibility in securing a sound economic foundation is the assurance given to the people to provide their basic needs. Suttas such as **Cakkavattisihanada**, **Kutadanta** clearly demonstrate that poverty is not only a cause of suffering for the pleasure seeking householders, but also a central theme in any analysis of social suffering. These suttas show that lack of basic necessities and unemployment cause poverty and lead people to corrupt practices as stealing. Unemployment leads to waste of labour and a reduction in the production of goods, consequently creating poverty. **Aggañña Sutta** cites laziness as a contributory factor for peoples' idleness. **Kutadanta Sutta** mentions lack of basic capital as a contributory factor for this idleness or unemployment. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the state to utilize labour and provide necessary capital and make people contribute to the economic security of a country. Behind all these factors is another one, and that is the existence of a 'poor class' in the country. Hence,

the primary objective of the state in its attempt to alleviate poverty should be to see equal distribution of wealth. A breakdown of the responsibilities of the government in this regard would be as follows:

- i. Provision of employment for all who could be employed.
- ii. Distribution of basic capital among those who need.
- iii. Making provision for equal distribution of wealth.
- iv. If there happen to be any who do not - really benefit by these, steps should be taken to provide them with their basic necessities.

#### 4.23

Decline in the production of goods lead to the spread of poverty. This is the main cause of social suffering; the spring of theft and other related anti-social activities.<sup>33</sup> This leads to armed uprising and wanton destruction of life. Unemployment lies at the base of all these disruptive forces and hence, the fundamental objective of Buddhist economic policy is the provision of full employment. Yet, it should be noted that the society envisaged in Buddhism is not a kind of consumer society as it is understood today. Hence it should be understood that Buddhism does not advocate maximization of production merely for the sake of provision of full employment.<sup>33</sup>

It is seen from the **Sabbasava Sutta** that there are three basic objectives in consumption of enjoyment. These are:

- (i) sustenance of man (ii) comfortable living and (iii) provision of the material foundation for spiritual achievement. According to Buddhist economic planning these objectives help increase of the production of goods.

#### 4.24

Buddhism, which rejects all theories of creation and determinism, does not consider that prayer or hope would succeed in bringing about either worldly or spiritual progress. It emphasises that human progress is completely based on human

labour. No external power could lead one to the desired goal, one has to tread the path oneself. The Buddhas' own query as to who will decline in what, if **prayer and wishful thinking is sufficient to bring about success, has a perennial value and relevance.** This really is the essence of the Buddhist philosophy that impels men to work. This suggests that the Buddhist position is that all those who could work, should work.

It is seen that Buddhism also holds that all activities concerned with production should be righteous. Righteous acquisition is what is acquired through effort, with the strength of one's own hands and sweat, which means through one's own labour. This also emphasises the fact that man needs some sort of a profitable employment.

It has already been shown that concepts such as 'puñña' (meritorious acts) and "kusala" (wholesome acts) are factors that motivate the Buddhists; and meritorious and wholesome acts are performed in three ways namely, verbally, physically and mentally. To perform such deeds man needs to engage in activity, in some kind of occupation. For example, to be compassionate is indeed a noble ideal. One who sees a person in misery through poverty would wish to alleviate his misery. But for this he would need money. It may be possible for one to be compassionate even without having money. For example, a doctor could show compassion on a patient without spending any money. Even though money is not involved, some kind of occupation becomes necessary to display one's friendliness and compassion to others. What is significant here is not the particular profession in which one is engaged, but its righteous performance; the performance of one's job in a way conducive to the well being of all. One's compassion friendliness and kind heartedness do not vary in accordance with the occupation one does. Buddhism does not categorize professions as high and low. These distinctions are mere social recognitions. Any occupation that is beneficial is considered important. All labour, physical as well as mental if directed for beneficial purposes is considered equally important.

The above discussion makes it clear that in a Buddhist society occupations are necessary because of the following three reasons.

- (i) As Buddhism rejects the intervention of external powers, and holds that fulfillment of one's wishes is dependent on labour,
- (ii) as Buddhism holds that all activities pertaining to production should be righteous, and (iii) as Buddhism accepts **punna/papa** and **kusala/akusala** are factors that motivate the individual to act.

However, due to certain defects and shortcomings in the modern economic system, solving this problem of unemployment has become a very grave issue all over the world. Any consumer oriented society is generally inclined towards profit making and, hence, attempts to achieve maximum profit through minimum labour. This prompts increased use of technology which in turn deprives many of their occupations. Yet, many economists have shown that technology could be wisely used in a manner that is conducive to the generation of employment. This unemployment due to the profuse use of technology is a malady seen in developing countries. The main cause of unemployment that is plaguing the economics of developed countries is due to another defect in these consumer oriented societies.

#### 4.25

Expecting a more luxurious and comfortable life the consumer societies are rapidly engaged in stock-piling goods and services. In these societies the standard of living is measured by the annual consumption and, those who consume more are placed high in the social gradation.<sup>34</sup> This competition to consume more compels members of the society to seek better employment, and there is a constant struggle for this.<sup>35</sup> Sometimes they idle hoping for better employment. Buddhism clearly says that the world will remain discontent, and as such unemployment created by people laying idle in wait for better forms of employment would never be solved under any system of economy. In a Buddhist society this kind of situation would not arise for, it teaches the proper limits of enjoyment. Members of Buddhist societies would be satisfied and content with the kind of employment they find according to their

capabilities and qualifications. However, one should not interpret this attitude of contentment and satisfaction as a sort of lethargic attitude encouraged by Buddhism inducing people not to make any attempt to realize the potential that lay dormant in them.

#### 4.26

The **Kutadanta Sutta** says that authorities should provide the basic necessities for those who are engaged in agriculture, cattle-breeding, trade and so on. The term 'bija bhatta' refers to good seeds and 'pabhata' to initial capital; this suggests the proper organisation of production and distribution which really is the essence of the economy. As pointed out in Buddhist texts there should also exist a system of education providing technical and skill training in varied arts and crafts according to the abilities of the people. The government alone cannot supply employment and, besides, all do not seek government employment. The term 'sippannatarena' (through some other craft) refers to those who are engaged perhaps in self-employment. The **Yanaropa Sutta**<sup>36</sup> shows how water resources, irrigation become important in a Buddhist economic system.

The **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta** explains how maldistribution of wealth leads to poverty.<sup>37</sup> The special emphasis laid on the maldistribution of wealth as the main cause of poverty and consequent social upheaval is well brought out by Ven. Prof. Kamburupitiya Ariyasena.<sup>38</sup> Emphasising this aspect as stated in the **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta** the same writer says.<sup>39</sup>

"The peculiar thing in the Sutta is the reiteration of the main cause, the dangerous consequence of the maldistribution of the resources in the country (**adhananam dhane ananupadiyamane**). The Buddha emphasizes seven times the danger of increasing poverty in society; an unusual phenomenon in the Pali Canon".<sup>40</sup>

Prof. K. N. Jayatilleka<sup>40</sup> explains how this Sutta describes the division and the rift that take place in society due to maldistribution of wealth:

"Here it is stated that with the maldistribution of goods, there is likely to be economic inequality resulting in a division of the world into the rich and the poor or the haves and the have nots. Owing to the failure to meet other demands tension and organized violence spring up between the two factions and there is a gradual loss of values in human society".

Ven. Prof. Hammalawa Saddhatissa therā also strongly emphasizes this aspect of the Sutta.<sup>41</sup>

While emphasizing maldistribution of the nation's wealth and resources as the prime cause of poverty, Buddhism considers eradication of this as the responsibility of the state<sup>42</sup>. While not condoning violent acts and armed struggles, Buddhism, in no uncertain term, states that economic inequality is the cause leading to violence and complete disruption of social ethics.

#### 4.27

The Suttas suggest many ways through this could be remedied. The norms and the duties that are to be followed by a Cakkavattiraja (Universal Monarch) contain some such remedial measures. For example, provision of guard, care and protection<sup>43</sup> to all in the Kingdom as well as assurance of their economic security are two such important measures.<sup>44</sup>

The **Kutadanta Sutta** suggests the provision of basic capital to people to get self-employed according to their capabilities, inclinations and also in keeping with the needs of the nation's economy<sup>45</sup>. the provision of the infra-structure, primary needs and payment of reasonable wages.<sup>46</sup> Similarly the **Kutadanta Sutta** suggests also the provision of food and other basic needs to those who are not in a position to obtain them or do not receive them for some reason or the other.<sup>47</sup> Similarly important, according to the texts, is the setting up of a viable fiscal policy, an effective system of taxation which while not unduly burdening the taxpayer at times of difficulties<sup>48</sup> would enrich the state coffers at times of economic boom in the country.<sup>49</sup> The **Seri Sutta**<sup>50</sup> also says that the state could, under special circumstances, tax the extra-ordinary rich and

distribute whatsoever so accrued for the benefit of the poor. The state before being concerned about the well being of the rulers should attend to the welfare of the subjects.<sup>51</sup> The rulers should not get infatuated with self-aggrandisement.<sup>52</sup> The rulers should be compassionate towards subjects like fathers towards children.<sup>53</sup> The economic plan put forward by the **Kutadanta Sutta**<sup>54</sup> says that the family unit should be well secured and established in order to make the people of the country a contented lot. A very comprehensive and systematic economic plan should be drawn up,<sup>55</sup> by consulting the experts,<sup>56</sup> taking into account the views of the public,<sup>57</sup> and never acting in a autocratic manner.<sup>58</sup>

#### 4.28

The need for proper distribution of wealth and resources is found emphasised not only in economic affairs related to the state, but also in economic matters pertaining to the individual as well as to the Sangha. In chapter 03 it was shown that wealth should not be allowed to get accumulated and lay idle, instead it should be made to circulate and generate more wealth. The **Pattakamma Sutta**<sup>59</sup> explains in detail how wealth earned righteously should be spent properly, fulfilling one's obligations and duties towards various sections in the society, and towards the state. The concept of the 'worship of directions' presented in the **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>60</sup> 'sappurisa concept' in the **Sappurisa Sutta**<sup>61</sup> concepts of 'charity' (dana)<sup>62</sup> and 'four modes' of hospitality (**sangahavatthu**)<sup>63</sup> given in the **Vyagghapajja Sutta** also stress the fact that wealth should circulate in the society for the benefit of its members. The **Kosambiya Sutta**<sup>64</sup> which cites non-sharing of wealth as a main cause of social conflict points out the necessity of sharing even what a monk receives on his alms round. Conceitment through wealth is a characteristic that is directly denounced in Buddhist social ethics.<sup>65</sup> Private ownership which is a basic factor contributing to economic inequality is a feature conspicuous by its absence in the Buddhist Sangha community.<sup>66</sup>

#### 4.29

The **Aggañña Sutta** explains the origin as well as the social acceptance of the system of private ownership. The adverse effects of this system is minutely analysed in the **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta**. These sources clearly demonstrate that it is this system of private ownership that gave rise to series of corrupt and evil practices beginning from stealing and ending in ruthless massacre of each other. This, however, does not mean that prior to the origin of the system of private ownership, there did not exist any form of corruption or evil. What is really meant is that it is private ownership that contributed to multiply the evil and corruption and also helped their rapid spread. All these are results of a process of series inter-dependent, inter-connected mutually influencing factors. Buddhism does not accept a first cause or a single cause. Thus, Buddhism shows how material factors, social factors, psychological factors operate mutually affecting each other. Therefore, Buddhism does not hold that an ideal society and an ideal individual who is totally emancipated could be produced by only removing private ownership from the society. Perhaps, this is the philosophical reason why the Buddhist economic system does not propose the total elimination of the system of private ownership. The suttas show that besides private ownership, there are other contributory factors for the spread of evil and corrupt practices in the society.

#### 4.30

The Buddha established the Sangha community on the fundamental principle of collective ownership. It has already been shown that the monks were not permitted to possess anything other than their basic requirements. It was pointed out earlier that the rules pertaining to the Sangha community could also be taken as guide-lines when organizing the institutions of lay society. If so, did the Buddha expect the wise to follow the example of the sangha community and form a social system sans private ownership? It is clear from the Tripitaka that the Buddha does not advocate such a society for the laity. Then is it not possible to get rid of the system

of private ownership from a society which has a majority of ordinary lay people? This is a question that deserves further inquiry.

The Vinaya mentions four offences referred to as '*parajika*' and a monk who commits any of these loses his monkhood. The first among them is sexual intercourse. The *Aggañña Sutta* narrates how sexual intercourse and family life started. One who wanders about alone and lives in solitude can go about wherever he desires just as a swan leaving the lake. Yet, a settled life is compulsory for a couple living as husband and wife. They need to have a minimum of things at least, as their personal property. This personal property may vary according to their needs as well as their resources. Personal property and private ownership are really a part and parcel of family life, without which a family life is almost impossible. As Buddhism accepts a stable, well secured family, it is not practically possible, according to Buddhism, to conceive of a household which completely rejects private ownership.

The life in Sangha Community is different. The monks have to completely abstain from sexual intercourse, renounce household life, give up the obligation of maintaining wife and children. They are not tied to a settled life. They lead lives dependent on others which, in other words, means that they are not engaged in the production of any goods or services that have economic value. On the contrary, the householders have necessarily to engage in some kind of production; the life of monks, too, is dependent on the productivity of the householders. It is seen that along with production, there arises the concept of ownership or possession, which is based on the feeling of individuality. And this feeling of individuality, even in a very faint form exists in all worldlings. The monk is one who has given up such a feeling, or one who is attempting intelligently to follow a direct shortcut to get rid of this feeling of individuality. Therefore, though it is possible to abandon private possessions in community life of monks, it is not possible to do so in lay societies. The other important question pertains to individual freedom. The order of monks is a completely

voluntary organization, which adopted collective ownership without any coercion. One can enter into it or leave it on his own will. But, the lay society is different. One has to be in it, and even accept certain norms and customs against one's own will. Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that it is not possible completely to abandon the concept of private ownership from lay society and that it is practicable only in a community life like that of the Sangha, who have volunteered to give up household life and along with it all its encumbrances and follow a quicker, short-cut to ethical perfection.

#### 4.31

Prof. Gunapala Dharmasiri<sup>67</sup> makes the following observation on common ownership.

"The Buddha maintained that the ideal type of economic distribution was the communistic ownership of property, and the ideal type of political institution was the democratic system of government. But, unfortunately, he believed the both these were too idealistic for the common man, because both presupposed the necessity of the existence of a highly spiritually and technically developed society where greed, hatred and ignorance do not exist. Communistic ownership presupposes a society of ego-less individuals. This ego-lessness cannot be so easily attained because those three defilements are too much embedded in the human psyche. Therefore if one needs to see the birth of a communistic society, its progress has necessarily to be coupled with a parallel progress in morality and spirituality. Democracy also needs a society which is very intelligent being not swayed by emotions such as like and dislike. Actually the Buddha succeeded in practically realizing the truth of this possibility when he established the order of Monks (Sangha) which is completely communistic in economic distribution and democratic in political constitution. He recommended the Sangha as the best medium to practise and progress in morality and spirituality because it supplied the ideal socio-economic miles for such progress".

Thus the only conclusion possible, in accordance with the Buddhist teaching is that the intelligent man should have the Buddhist ideal society and its institutions are his goal, and then strive to build the lay social institutions to approximate this ideal as far as possible. This is the lesson one can draw from the community of monks when building economic institutions of the lay society. This is why the Buddha has advised to build a system of distribution of wealth which is devoid of inequality and which minimizes the gap between haves and have nots. The state institutions are expected to follow this example. What the Buddha desired to convey to the society by establishing this kind of common ownership was that all economic resources belonging to the society should be utilized for the maximum benefit of the whole society.

#### (A) WHY THE STATE ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE RIGHTEOUS AND SCRUPULOUS

4.32

According to the norms of a Cakkavatti-raja (Universal Monarch) one of his duties is to bring about the eradication of all corruption in his kingdom. Another of his duties is to provide righteous care and protection to all in his kingdom. The **Dhammaraja Sutta** says that it is righteousness that is considered as the supreme of the Universal Monarch. The **Dhammika Sutta** explains how all holding administrative responsibilities become either good or bad depending on the moral quality of the King. This Sutta further explains how the environment, the whole nature reacts according to the moral quality of the ruler. Not only individuals even the state has to act righteously with regard to economic activities. Both the **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta** and the **Kutadanta Sutta** prove poverty as the immediate cause leading to evil and corrupt practices in the society; and the main factor in this context is maldistribution of the nation's wealth and resources. The maldistribution and the remedial measures suggested by Buddhism to counter-act this have already been discussed. Herein, it is hoped

to focus the attention on righteous features that ought to prevail in a state sponsored economic organization. It is stated that the salient aspect in the foreign policy of a Universal Monarch is the Five Precepts (**Pancasila**). His policy consists of advising the rulers of regions that accepts his sovereignty to observe the Five Precepts and continue the system that has been previously followed in administering the Kingdoms. This shows that practise of righteousness should not be limited merely to the nation, and that it should be a factor that generally affects the institutions that organize foreign policies.

4.33

It is expected from both the individual and the state to choose the righteous means of production and operate them in a non-violent way. There are two kinds of activities in the economic sphere. One of these consists of activities which are generally harmful to man and hence not to be encouraged, but to be eradicated by the state, whether Buddhist or non-Buddhist. Trade in weapons, slaves intoxicants and so on fall into this category. The other consists of economic activities which Buddhists consider as not in keeping with Buddhist concepts. Slaughter of animals and activities related to such professions as rearing animals for flesh, fishing industry, or even harming animals for the sake of making clothes, decorative items and various kinds of household utensils should not find a place in the economic policy of a Buddhist state. If the exclusion of such activities affects the beliefs and sentiments of minorities belonging to other denominations, then it is the duty of the Buddhist state to convince them about the harmfulness of such activities by citing evidence which are not purely Buddhistic, but which would in general be acceptable and convincing.

4.34

It has already been shown that rearing of animals for flesh is not compatible with Buddhist ethical teachings. Similarly economists-even non-Buddhist-economists-have shown it to be a harmful activity even when viewed from a purely economic angle.

Prof. Howard Richards of Richmond Earlham Institute presents seven principles that pertain to 'peace, satisfactory living conditions and environmental balance'. One of them is called an **efficiency principle** which he describes as follows:

"An efficiency principle with Cost/benefit ratios should be minimized. A new economics will view efficiency in human terms, seeking measures of benefits in terms of human need and values. Example; Frances Moore Lappe established that the world deficit in protein can be overcome by shifting to the directly human consumption of protein rich grains legumes instead of feeding grains to cattle. Cattle consumes many times more protein than they produce, and hence are usually inefficient.

Therefore, of course, exceptions..... such as cases where cattle can graze land not suitable for crops. The point is that the criteria for authentic efficiency are given by comparing alternative ways to use resources to serve human needs and values, in a sustainable relationship to the environment.<sup>69</sup>

Herbert Girardet<sup>70</sup> makes a very interesting comparison between the ratios of grain used to feed cattle and meat used for consumption by peoples of certain countries.

"In the U.S.A. the average citizen now consumes 240 lbs or 110 kilograms of meat per year. A UK citizen eats 160 lbs, a Russian 112, a Brazilian 70, a Chinese 46, A Nigerian 13, and Indian 2.4. Around 40 percent of world cereal production is used to feed livestock and in the richer countries this figure can be as high as 75 percent. In fact, in the U.S.A. 90 percent of cereals used in the home market go into animal food".

This idea has been confirmed by subsequent research<sup>71</sup> These researches have shown that a good part of starvation prevalent in the world is due to this use of cereals as food for livestock. Alfred Castler<sup>72</sup> the Nobel prize winner for physics has shown that according to the calculation of the French environmentalist Rene Dumont, in 1977 the total production of cereals was 140 million tons, and of this amount 43 million tons, were used as food for

livestock. While a famine was prevailing in Brazil, in 1977 alone 3,30,000 tons of Soya beans were exported from Brazil to France as food for animals, which was a major cause for starvation among humans.

On the above evidence it becomes clear that when viewed not merely from a Buddhist point of view but even from an economic point of view use of cereals as animal food is less profitable than its use directly as human food. Thus rearing of animals for flesh is an obstacle in the way of eradicating starvation among humans. A majority of the meat so produced is consumed by the people in rich countries. Hence, whosoever that sympathises with starving millions of poor countries will find it difficult to engage in rearing animals for flesh. Thus this problem of animal slaughter and scarcity of food assumes global proportions.

#### 4.35

Is it not possible to exist without eating flesh and meat? Some like Jains abstain from meat eating as it is prohibited by their religion. There are others who abstain from meat eating for different reasons. Many have vouched for the fact that their longevity is due to their abstention from meat eating. It has not been said that an individual's body and mind will not grow fully if he were to abstain from eating meat or flesh. When understanding the Buddhist position on this issue one has to remember that the Buddha has not prohibited meat eating. As seen from the **Jivaka Sutta**<sup>73</sup> the Buddha did not consider it wrong to eat meat if one is not aware that the animal was killed and cooked for his own sake. Though not sponsored or even backed by Buddhists or a Buddhist government, in a country there are many who are engaged in meat production. When considering all these facts it becomes clear that a Buddhist Government should not include in its economic programme animal-husbandry for producing meat.<sup>74</sup> If any other laws pertaining to this issue are to be made such laws should be formulated not on Buddhistic grounds but on economic and such other grounds.

4.36

Supply of goods based purely on demand is the general attitude adopted in all consumer oriented societies. However, the Buddhist economy endorses a different approach for, it considers it necessary to take account how conducive are the goods so produced for physical, mental and ethical development of the consumers. This also makes clear that it is not the consumer that should be the sole competent authority regarding the selection of goods that he needs. For example, no government could sponsor or endorse production of liquor or any kind of dangerous drugs. The evils entailing to consumption of intoxicants are well documented in Buddhist text, and besides, it goes against the fifth of the Five Precepts. Some countries in the world have imposed a ban on use of liquor, and economists have shown that, if genuinely interested, any country could exclude production of intoxicating drinks from its economic programme.<sup>75</sup>

4.37

Some leaders of governments have spoken out strongly against consumption of liquor, describing the evil consequences connected with it. One such leader to emphasise the evil effects of liquor was Mikhail Gorbachev,<sup>76</sup> the former President of Russia. His statement amply demonstrates the devastating effects liquor had brought about in Russian society. Liquor and drug addiction is a rapidly growing problem in Sri Lanka, too.<sup>77</sup>

4.38

Production of arms and weapons including chemicals is an ever growing lucrative business in which a number of developed countries are greatly involved.<sup>78</sup> Consumerism is again a primary cause for the increase in arms production. Ahmad Abubakar<sup>79</sup> explains the basic issues involved in this:

"This excess consumption requires a vast amount of national resources. While science and technology have continued to rise to higher levels Western natural resources have diminished more

quickly. Today the West cannot satisfy its own demand for such huge quantities of resources. Even if it could, why not conserve and exploit cheaper resources of other countries? Hence a growing dependence of the industrialized countries on the Third World. Thus Alvin Tofler says.... industrial civilization has to be fed from without. It could not survive unless it intergrated the rest of the world into the monetary system and controlled that system for its own benefit". This heavy dependance of industrialized countries on the natural resources of the Third World to sustain excess consumption has occasioned fierce competition among those nations".

The above statement is proved by an observation made by Gerald Mische<sup>80</sup>

'In today's lawless world economy, no nation can be expected to substantially reduce its armaments as long as it is dependent upon external sources for raw-materials and markets'.

4.39

Another reason for increase and accumulation of armaments by countries is their desire for domination and for expansion of their political and economic ideals. Twelve industrialist countries are engaged in large scale production of arms, and among them are America, Russia, West Germany, Great Britain, France and China. Japan which reduced considerably the production of armaments after the second world war has diverted all savings on arms productions for industrial purposes and has become an industrial giant in the present world.<sup>81</sup> In this regard Costa Rica presents the most exemplary example, in which military expenditure is zero, and today its a very prosperous country in Central America.<sup>82</sup> Such savings could be used to reduce hunger and poverty in the world Mikhail Gorbachev declared in 1988 before the U. N. General Assembly that both the United States of America and U. S. S. R. have amassed nuclear weapons,<sup>83</sup> and further he added that in spite of such store piling of armaments no country would be able to become all powerful.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, all nations should realize the perils involved in the production and accumulation of arms, and give it up.

## (B) THE NECESSITY OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

### 4.40

The inter-relation between man and nature influences social institutions and also creates numerous social problems. When these problems go beyond the control of man, governments are forced to intervene, and this is well illustrated in the *Aggañña Sutta*.<sup>85</sup> The *Cakkavattisihanada Sutta*<sup>86</sup> and the *Kutadanta Sutta* also insist on the necessity of a state policy regarding the conservation of nature. The *Mangala Sutta*<sup>88</sup> and *Cakka Sutta*<sup>89</sup> show how a good environment becomes conducive to progress. The *Ratthapala Sutta*<sup>90</sup> shows how dissatisfaction leads to conflict, and this is further elaborated in the *Culadukkhakkhandha Sutta*.<sup>91</sup> All these show the compelling need of a proper environmental policy in the state economic planning.

The depreciation and destruction of natural resources and the environmental pollution are problems of recent times. Industrial development, technological revolutions, urbanization and above all the spread of consumerism are among the major contributory factors for these problems. These were non-existent in India during pre-Christian era and hence there are no particular discourses in the Tripitaka dealing with these problems. Yet, as Buddhism is a religion concerned with the man and the world in which he lives, it presents certain ideas about the attitude that should be adopted with regard to nature.<sup>92</sup>

### 4.41

The *Dhammapada*<sup>93</sup> says that men driven through fear seek refuge in forest groves, trees and mountains. Man got frightened of nature because he failed to understand nature. The *Aggañña Sutta* explains how things manifest clearly when their origins are known. This *Sutta*<sup>94</sup> very vividly brings out the essential relations among human nature, environment, ethics, politics and economy. The message that the canon offers is that problems could be solved only by understanding the doctrine of Dependent origination.

### 4.42

The *Dhammapada*<sup>95</sup> which says irrigators lead the waters, carpenters bend the wood, the wise control themselves'. This suggests that man could use nature to suit his needs. According to the context, it appears that Buddhism approves such adaptation of nature for the benefit of man.<sup>96</sup> This could be successfully done only if one perfectly understands how nature functions. The *Accayika Sutta*,<sup>97</sup> *Khetta Sutta*<sup>98</sup> and the *Nidana Sutta*<sup>99</sup> all occurring in the *Anguttaranikaya* present clues as to how one could get this understanding. Both the *Sigalovada Sutta* and the *Dhammapada* employ the simile of a bee that collects honey from flowers without harming it, to explain how a person, who properly understands the workings of nature, taps it for his benefit. Not only does the bee not harm the flower, but helps the process of pollination. Commenting on this Prof. Lily de Silva<sup>100</sup> says:

"The Buddhist admonition is to utilize nature in the same way as a bee collects pollen from flowers, neither polluting its beauty nor depleting its fragrance. Just as the bee manufactures honey out of pollen, so man should be able to find happiness and fulfilment in life without harming the natural world in which he lives".

### 4.43

Nature is not a divine creation effected for the use of man and, hence one should not consider that nature is meant solely for one's benefit. Instead, men should accept the right of all other beings to live on earth. Man gets the opportunity of living on earth only if there is harmony among humans, animals and plant life. This is why men should adopt a very understanding and a friendly attitude towards nature. The *Metta Sutta* conveys this message and the *Bhuripanna Jataka*<sup>101</sup> describes the breaking of a branch that provides shade as an unfriendly act. It is popularly accepted that the Buddha, too, showed gratitude to the Bodhi tree under which he attained Enlightenment. Douglas Burns<sup>102</sup> says that the Buddhists take pride in their sensitivity and attunement to nature.

It is necessary for man to realize that he is not the lord of nature, for just as nature man, too, is subject to impermanency. In the true sense of the word there is nothing he could call "I" or 'Mine'. Both his body and mind are causally dependent. It is depending on conditions that consciousness arises. It is essential that man should realize that he is merely a part of nature. The danger of being ignorant of this fact is well explained by Phra Rajavaramuni.<sup>103</sup>

"Man has been so much enchanted by scientific and technological progress that he is misled into believing that he has almost completely conquered nature and has control over it. He also believes that with his conquest of nature, all problems will be solved and heaven will be established on earth. But he is not aware that nature that he thinks he has conquered is not the whole of it, but only a part of it, possibly a half of it, that is the external material world. The other half is within himself, the nature of man or the man as a part of nature. In the process of struggle to conquer the material world of nature man even often neglects his responsibility to master the inner nature within himself and tends to lose control over it. Conversely this inner nature has grown stronger and has taken much control over him."

Due to this misconception about his superiority over nature man unwittingly gets self-alienated. It is only man who can realize the relation between man and nature. This is the very reason why he should act in an enlightened manner.

#### 4.44

Being endowed with the correct understanding about the relation between himself and nature, man should not act in any way that is harmful to nature. Instead he should conserve nature, and help its development. The *Kutadanta Sutta*<sup>104</sup> in its account of the sacrifice offered by King Mahavijita explains how it was done without harming any life, not exploiting labour not killing a single animal. As Prof. Trevor Ling<sup>105</sup> points out:

"... What emerges as the point of the story is a criticism of Brahmanical sacrifice on the grounds of economic wastefulness,

cruelty to animals, forced labour with harsh treatment of labourers, and oppressive taxation of the people in order to pay for it all....

The simile of the 'fig-fruit glutton' (*udumtarakhadika*) describes a man who, in order to eat fig fruits, causes many fruits to fall and eats only a few and abandons the remaining lot. This sort of waste is utterly condemned in Buddhism.<sup>106</sup> The *Vinaya* says that people believed that trees have life, and hence cutting of trees is considered a *pacittiya* offence for monks.<sup>107</sup> In the *Dhammapada*<sup>108</sup> using a pun on the word '*vana*' (meaning both defilements and forest) the Buddha says, cut '*vana*' (defilements) but not the '*rukka*' (trees). According Ven. Piyadassi Thero here the Buddha uses this pun purposely to emphasize the fact that trees should be protected.<sup>109</sup> Under normal circumstances it is an *dukkata* offence for a monk either to urinate or to spit in a place where there is fresh grass.<sup>110</sup>

#### 4.45

The *Pajjota Sutta*<sup>111</sup> of the *Samyutta nikaya* clearly brings out the need of rain and water to beings. Hence, urinating or spitting into water is said to constitute a *dukkata* offence for a monk.<sup>112</sup> Water is divided into two categories as 'drinking water and 'water for use'.<sup>113</sup> Monks are advised not to dust their bedding near places where there is such water.<sup>114</sup> These admonitions made in the 6th century B.C. have relevance even today. The *Vattakkhandha* of the *Cullavagga* contains detailed instructions regarding hygiene and cleanliness. It explains in minute detail how one should clean one's dwelling place, beddings etc. It is careful even to point out what one should not do when there is blowing.<sup>115</sup> It gives instructions regarding how one should 'air-out' rooms<sup>116</sup> and keep the surroundings and toilets clean.<sup>117</sup>

#### 4.46

The *Vanaropa Sutta* also focuses the attention on the importance of protection, conservation and development of the

environment. This Sutta says people who are engaged in such activities will prosper both in this world as well as in the next.<sup>118</sup> It draws attention to such aspects as planting of trees, forests orchards, construction of bridges and houses, supply of water<sup>119</sup> etc., all of which are, at present, projects undertaken at national and even global level. A very comprehensive and a socially beneficial environmental policy is presented in this Sutta.<sup>120</sup> Environmental problems were not so rampant during the Buddha's time, hence, this shows how futuristic is the Buddha's approach in this sphere. Deforestation, water-pollution, lack of a proper system of irrigation are causing severe problems at present. The reference to bridge builders (*setukaraka*) shows the emphasis laid on an efficient system of transportation and communication. Housing has become a very acute problem at present. The declaration of an international year of housing itself shows the magnitude this problem has reached at present. The Buddha's foresight with regard to this is seen from the **Kimdada Sutta**<sup>121</sup> of **Samyuttanikaya** which describes the giver of a house as the giver of everything.

#### 4.47

The stress and irritation caused by pollution of sound is also a major cause of worry in the present world, and the Buddha has focussed his attention on this aspect of environmental pollution.<sup>122</sup> Many Suttas clearly say that the contemporaries of the Buddha were much surprised by the quietitude adopted by the Buddha and his disciples. The **Samaññaphala Sutta**<sup>123</sup> of the **Dighanikaya** says that King Ajatassattu was somewhat apprehensive about the dead silence that prevailed in the mango grove where the Buddha was sojourning with a large following of disciples. In fact, he suspected whether this arranged visit of his to the Buddha was a plot to hand him over to his enemies. When selecting places of residence for monks solitude and noiselessness of the place were given special consideration.<sup>124</sup> The Buddha often advised monks that they should either engage in righteous talk or maintain golden silence.<sup>125</sup> The **Bhayabherava Sutta** points out that even the slightest sound could

disturb an uncontrolled mind.<sup>126</sup> Professor Lily de Silva very eloquently brings out the chaotic consequences of sound pollution that takes place at present.<sup>127</sup>

#### 4.48

Contribution of nature to aesthetic enjoyment is also discussed in canonical literature. The ordinary worldling, as he is full of defilements and overwhelmed by desire for possession, is unable to really enjoy natural beauty. It is not so with Arahants. They enjoy the beauty of forest groves where ordinary people find no pleasure.<sup>128</sup> The **Mahaparinibbana Sutta**<sup>129</sup> makes reference to a number of such beautiful groves. Poems of joy uttered by Elder Mahakassapa and the poems of Kaludai inviting the Buddha to visit Kapilavastu show how the saints appreciated the exquisite beauty of nature.<sup>130</sup>

#### 4.49

From the above discussion regarding the relation between man and nature it is possible to conclude that (i) according to the Buddhist point of view it is only an intelligent person who can properly understand this relation, (ii) man should not be frightened of nature, but should understand it, (iii) through this understanding he should make the best use of nature, even changing and adjusting it when necessary. (iv) this changes and adjustments should be effected without harming nature. (v) instead should enhance and foster nature (vi) man should, through the use of these natural resources, produce things (vii) while conserving nature man should also appreciate it, (viii) man should never consider himself to be superior to nature, but instead should consider himself to be a part and parcel of it, (ix) the man should consider that destruction of nature amounts to his own destruction and (x) man should develop his personality in a way that enables him to love it.

#### 4.50

When one takes into consideration the rapid population growth, continuous technological revolution, and urbanization it becomes

quite clear that it is the paramount responsibility of a government to formulate an environmental policy covering such areas as proper use of environment, its conservation and prevention of its pollution. It would be calamitous if proper steps are not taken to arrest depletion of certain natural resources which are threatened with total extinction. The arbitrary activities of man who is spurred by profit making motives should be checked not only because these activities destroy nature but also because they also obstruct equal distribution of these natural resources. The attention of the state should be directed towards living beings, vegetation and also minerals and other natural resources. The state should formulate rules regarding use of these resources and also promulgate sanctions against any infringement of these rules.

#### 4.51

Excessive consumption has now developed into a problem of global magnitude. This is closely linked to such other problems as security, threats of war, and pollution of environment. A body of world experts has published in 1987 a book entitled **Solutions for a Troubled World** wherein they scrutinize these issues and suggest solutions. In his contribution the Nobel Laureate Jan Tinbergen<sup>131</sup> observes:

"..... We are used to giving top priority to choosing in the type of social system we want to live in. That must change.

"Nuclear weapons force us now to give priority to a world security system, because without security there may be no human society left to inherit a better social system. A deteriorating global eco-system forces us now to give equal priority to a clean environment, since without a clean environment no human society may be left, to inherit a better social system."

Writers have pointed out that the Americans in a period of forty years have consumed what the whole humanity has consumed during a long period of four thousand years.<sup>132</sup> There is evidence to

show that an average American consumes four to five times more than an average consumer in the developing countries.<sup>133</sup> It has been pointed out that "over consumption has inspired experts to coin the term overdevelopment, to capture the level of excess consumption in the industrialized west".<sup>134</sup> Westerners themselves have realized this imbalance in consumption and they have begun to openly express their views on this. Leif Sandholt<sup>135</sup> delivering a lecture in Right Livelihood Award Speeches said:

"What makes thousands of Swedes, Danes, Finns and Norwegians in our movement accept a reduction in their economic standards of living? The reasons are many: we know that continued economic growth in our rich countries will be at the expense of those fellow human beings - the under privileged in the Third World.

We think it is a senseless situation where eighty percent of what is consumed in the world is consumed by the twenty percent of humanity who live in the rich countries. We refuse to participate in continuing this unfairness between us and our brothers and sisters in the Third World.

So first of all our work is based on our human desire for justice. For many of us, this desire is also based on a feeling of moral and historical responsibility for the development which has led to today's lack of balance".

Extentionist and imperial policies, the ensuring wars and the proliferation of arms, subjugation of poor and under-developed countries, their falling into indebtedness are for most part linked to harmful environment policies prompted by desire for overconsumption. Prof. Padmasiri de Silva<sup>136</sup> commenting on these rash policies says:

"The violent and aggressive approach to the natural world is fed by man's greed for short-term spectacular success without care for long-term ill-effects on another generation."

### (C) THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RESCUING THE WORKER AND THE CONSUMER FROM INEQUALITY

#### 4.52

The **Kutadanta Sutta**<sup>137</sup> explaining the proper form of sacrifice, decry the use of forced labour. Prof. Trevor Ling too has pointed out this fact.<sup>138</sup> The **Mahacattarisaka Sutta**<sup>139</sup> explains wrong livelihood as that force of violent, unscrupulous and corrupt livelihood carried out through deceit, platter, prognostication, trickery and desire for excessive profit. The opposite of this is right livelihood. Many other violent and corrupt practices employed for the sake of livelihood is listed in the **Sammaññaphala Sutta**<sup>140</sup> Various forms of exploitation of labour are referred to in the **Sigalovada Sutta**.<sup>141</sup> In the case of any act in breach of Five Precepts tantamount to a violent unscrupulous and an aggressive act. An economy based on such acts, therefore, tantamount to an economy based on violence unscrupulousness and aggression.

When analyzing all these facts it becomes clear that in economic activities there are two ways in which man is oppressed. One is labour exploitation; and the other is consumer exploitation. The **Cakkavattisihanada Sutta**<sup>142</sup> which presents the Buddhist ideal of Kingship emphatically states that it is the bounden duty of the Cakkavatti-raja (Universal Monarch) to eradicate all these oppressive features.

#### 4.53

The only way to spiritual progress and emancipation as well as to material progress and happiness is to work intelligently and with effort. When questioned by Alavaka as to how to overcome suffering, the Buddha replied that suffering could be overcome by effort; then again when questioned as to how one could earn wealth the Buddha answered that it is possible by one who acts in a suitable way, one who can endure and put forth effort.<sup>143</sup> The Buddha explained to Anathapindika that one's goals are not

achieved through mere wishful thinking and prayer, but instead one has to select the proper path and pursue along it.<sup>144</sup> Besides, the Buddha rejects such superstitious beliefs as dependence on auspicious moments and good omens.<sup>145</sup> By emphasising effort and striving Buddhism attaches a very high value to labour. As it rejects the belief in a Supreme Creator - God, Buddhism stresses self-reliance. Thus the Tripitaka very clearly brings out that man has the initiative and the ability to achieve his desired goals. Therefore, it is accepted in Buddhism that any attempt to achieve one's goals through means other than one's righteous effort is a violent attempt. Throughout the texts it is emphasized that effort should be righteous. It is only what is obtained through righteous effort that is considered 'obtained righteously (**dhamma laddha**)'.<sup>146</sup> This effort could be physical, mental or even spiritual; all such righteous efforts are considered as being of equal value.<sup>147</sup> As effort is greatly emphasized in Buddhism, it pays special consideration to all kinds of work and professions, for these help people to earn a comfortable living and accumulate merit.<sup>148</sup> The self-sacrificing lives led by the noble-ones are full of such activities. The Buddha himself devoted most of his time for the benefit of others. The present day attitude of doing the minimum of work possible, neglecting duty, earn the maximum possible by spending minimum labour, dependence on luck, windfalls or some other kinds of fortune, over emphasis on the use of machines instead of human labour are completely opposed to the Buddhist attitude towards labour and realization of one's goals.

According to Buddhism economic development should be attained through the use of man's potential to the maximum. Hence it stresses the importance of suitable employment for all. It considers both waste of labour as well as exploitation of labour as evident unscrupulous and aggressive acts in the economic sphere. Similarly Buddhism considers it wrong to devalue labour.

#### 4.54

Some kind of employment is necessary for people to procure their needs and lead comfortable lives and, hence, it is a duty

incumbent upon the state to provide suitable avenues of employment for the people. It has already been pointed out the eruption of the economy is a root cause that leads to break down in social ethics, conflict and terrorism. This also brings out the importance of providing employment for people. Even though a Government may not be able to provide all with employment, it is imperative that it should organize the economic policy in a way that would be conducive to generate employment. In this context Governments of the present day are faced with certain problems. One such problem is concerned with the provision of employment and use of modern technology and machinery. Use of technology and machinery makes manual labour redundant. Non use of these hampers production. Striking a balance between these is an acute problem at present. The Buddhist position is that this sort of problems should be solved by using discretion and adopting suitable methods. Even economic experts like Schumacher endorses the use of suitable technology wherever necessary. Buddhism does not advocate a policy of using human labour at the cost of other things, as increase in production etc. Wherever provision of employment is the crucial issue involved, then human labour should be used, wherever increase of production is more crucial, then use of technology is imperative. In striking a balance the aim should be to serve the people, to fulfil their requirements, and not in mere profit making. In the same way when using modern technology it is very necessary to see that there will not be any kind of exploitation and pollution of resources and environment. Instead, attention should be directed towards conservation of both resources and environment, so that use of modern technology would remain within proper limits.

#### 4.55

The devaluation of labour is an inherent feature of modern complex economic activities. It is this feature that became the butt of Marxist criticism of capitalism. While Buddhism upholds the dignity of labour it points out the necessity of assigning of work according to the capabilities of the workers involved; and this may

vary under different circumstances and contexts. For example, the capability expedited from a household' employee would be different from that of an employee in a factory. So would it vary in other contexts. In the present, of course, factors other than the capability of a worker are considered in selecting workers and assigning work. For example, nepotism, various biases and prejudices greatly influence in selecting people for jobs and assigning duties to them. This results in placing the wrong person in the wrong place, which consequently causes breakdowns in the economy, and dissatisfaction among the workers. When there is no proper assignment of work according to the capability of the workers there is naturally a devaluation of labour. The duty of the state is to see that this sort of situations do not occur.

Food and wages are two of the important issues that lie at the center of many an employer-employee conflict. These are primary requisites that are crucial to an efficient service. Undue concern for profit making might be an obstacle with regard to provision of food, and wages that commensurate with work. Therefore, the state should pay attention to these aspects. Similarly the state should see to it that the workers health is well looked after, both in the public and private sectors. The phrase '**acchariya rasanam samvibhagena**' is generally rendered as sharing whatever tasty food with workers. What this means is the necessity of developing a feeling of comradeship between the employers and employees, so that it would contribute to an increase in out-put of work. Perhaps, in the modern, parlance this might be same as incentive, which is very helpful to develop cordial employer-employee relations, prevent waste, conflict and also increase efficiency. The importance of giving incentives has been emphasized by former President of U.S.S.R.<sup>149</sup> There are many ways in which incentives could be given. Incentives could be given for realizing the set targets, by provision of medical facilities or even by distributing shares.<sup>150</sup>

The other factors of importance are the granting of leave and retirement for the employees. The Pali phrase "**samaye**

vossaggena" conveys both these ideas. This shows that the workers should not be over worked, and that they should be sent on retirement at the proper time.

#### 4.56

Unless the employers fulfil these obligations, it is not possible to expect the employees to discharge their duties properly. This will result in fights for rights, and consequently work will suffer.

In a Buddhist society the employer's obligations turn out to be the rights of the employee. So, when an employer fulfils his obligations the employee automatically gets his rights fulfilled. Therefore, there is no reason to fight for rights and hence, all economic activities continue to progress without any conflicts or fights. As both employers and employees are treated without any discrimination there is no opportunity for any kind of class struggles.<sup>151</sup> However, if there happen to be any kind of such class discrimination the state should take remedial measures. This is a way of preventing both exploitation and devaluation of labour.

#### 4.57

The consumer oriented society aims at maximizing the level of consumption, increasing the rate of production and creating new needs among the consumers. The modern man, who is being led by these overwhelmingly consumer oriented attitudes, seeks the aid of communication that disseminate falsehood and resort to violent and oppressive methods to create competitiveness among consumers. The helpless consumer who is neither directed by right view nor endowed with mindfulness becomes subject to ruthless exploitation, and becomes a puppet in the hands of the businessmen. Over-spending makes him get bogged in indebtedness and this process pervades and affects the whole society and develops into global magnitude, corrupting the whole economic system. This economic system leads the Third World countries into dire poverty and oppresses the developed, industrialized countries with the social malaise called consumerism. The Third world countries perish through hunger,

physical sicknesses and consequent death, while the developed countries get destroyed through restlessness, discontentment, psycho-somatic diseases and even suicide.

Under these circumstances the onerous duty incumbent upon the governments of all countries is to protect the consumer from this sort exploitation. Whether Buddhist or not, all governments should take necessary steps to curb undue competition, attempts to create artificial needs through false communication and advertising, desire to pile up goods in great magnitude and all means adopted to increase profit margins. This is a must for Buddhist countries for, they are expected to see the reality of things; this has become imperative for non-Buddhist countries in the face of the economic dilemma they are confronted with.

#### 4.58

Being motivated to make profit, consumers are exploited by various corrupt practices, some of which are quite well known and some not so known. Cheating the consumer by giving him goods which are under-weight, under-measure, below standard, adulterated, unhygienic are few such common means. Things discarded by developed countries as unfit for consumption are sold in under developed countries. The governments should prevent all such malpractices by using proper methods of standardization and educating both the producers and consumers to avoid such malpractices. Another aspect that deserves government attention is manipulated scarcity. Yet another aspect that deserves the special attention of governments is the pricing of goods; this is so specifically in countries where market-economic systems prevail. On the one hand resources are getting limited. On the other, a rapid population increase is taking place. On top of all this man's desires have no limitations. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for the governments to introduce, even by pressurizing, some form of 'control' to the present economic system, for all conflicts that lead to the destruction of morals and warfare are dependently originating. The fundamental characteristic of a righteous state economy is dignity and

non-exploitation of labour, as well as the non-exploitation of the consumer.

## (D) THE BUDGET

### 4.59

The preparation of the budget is important both for an individual and a nation, and for this it is necessary to strike a balance between production and consumption. However, usually consumer oriented societies, which consider consumption as the goal, are more inclined towards over consumption. In a society where progress and social respectability are measured by the annual rate of consumption of goods, it is natural to expect the maximum use of goods and services.<sup>152</sup> Consequently the problems that arise in this regard in developed and under - developed countries, too, are different. It is ridiculous for poor countries to structure their pattern of consumption on the lines followed in rich countries. Yet this is inevitable as long as under-developed countries follow the economic theories vogue in developed countries. This causes repercussions in the individuals as well as in the nation. The individuals by trying to live beyond their means fall into indebtedness. So does a nation that spends beyond its means. In developed countries different kinds of problems arise due to overconsumption. Depletion of resources, pollution of environment, trade competitions often leading to threats of war are some such problems. Hence, it is the responsibility of the state to plan the economy in a way that would avoid these problems and guide the nation's economy in the proper direction.

### 4.60

An enlightened government when formulating its budgetary policies, giving priority to the provision of basic requirements such as food, clothing, shelter, health, education etc, should take precautions not to allow international market forces to pose a threat to the existence of the people. Hence, it is necessary to attempt to become self-sufficient as far as possible. Though it may not be

possible to become totally self-sufficient, it is prudent to pay more attention to agricultural products. Unlike industrial products which are more or less accessories for comfortable living agricultural products are more fundamental to man's existence, and hence the necessity of this special attention. This policy should be followed by all countries which have favourable environments for agriculture. In areas of arts and crafts engaged in producing some kinds of luxury items technology and machinery could be used without causing any employment problem. However, a different approach has to be adopted with regard to the production of goods that form basic requirements of the people. If mere production and consumption are not taken as the goal then, of course, naturally a suitable approach should be adopted.

The advice given to Sigala regarding the balancing of his budget by dividing it into four portions, of which one is for day to day expenses, two for profitable investment and one for depositing for use at difficult times, could be meant not for the average person, but for a businessman.<sup>153</sup> What is important here is not the quantity of the portion, but the emphasis laid on consumption, investment and savings. Consumption does not merely denote the recurring expenses of the individual. It includes many other aspects, covering different social relations and ensuing obligations. As social problems such as maintenance of elders, destitute infants and problem of beggars are generally minimized in a true Buddhist society, the Buddhist economic system should necessarily pay more attention to proper maintenance of different social relations as those referred to in the **Sigalovada Sutta**. This is why even the **Kutadanta Sutta** says that the state should pay special heed to strengthen the economy of the family.

By advocating that two portions of one's income should be profitably invested the Buddhist economic theory emphasises the importance of investment. The pleasure enjoying householder, as he is obliged to discharge certain duties, has to develop to the best possible level his numerous economic institutions. Therefore, he has to pay special attention to investment with a view to develop various industries and businesses. The **Kutadanta Sutta** explains

how the state should encourage the businessmen and farmers. This Sutta presents two important concepts namely, drawing in of the poor yet skilled people as partners of a country's economic progress, and preventing the private sector action arbitrarily and unrighteously.

The **Ina Sutta** explains vividly the problems and miseries that follow indebtedness. Yet, the **Samaññaphala Sutta** shows borrowing money is sometimes inevitable. However, this Sutta cautions that if one borrows he should do so not for the purpose of consumption but for profitable investment. One who borrows money should be able to invest it profitably, and with the profit pay up the loan together with the interest. This advice is even more applicable and suitable for the state than to the individual. This is clearly seen from the lamentable situations to which certain countries have fallen because of heavy borrowings for the purpose of consumption.

#### 4.61

Conservation is yet another important aspect in Buddhist economics. Suttas contain numerous explanations regarding this. Suttas say that one should conserve one's resources so that he could make use of it when necessary, or at times of difficulties, thus envisaging two different situations where conservation becomes useful and meaningful. These two types of conservation seem to connote what is referred to in parlance as savings and insurance respectively. Advice pertaining to avoidance of falling into debt forms an important aspect of conservation. In order to avoid falling into debt it is necessary to close the avenues that lead to the destruction of wealth, to make the maximum use of resources and goods, to stop waste and to repair and maintain one's assets whatever they may be. As pointed out in the **Vyagghapajja Sutta** and also in the **Kula Sutta** good management is essential to achieve all these. Competency in work, absence of laziness, discretionary ability to select the most appropriate means, good training, organizational ability are all aspects of good management. Besides, the person who is in-charge of the undertaking should be a person

suitable for it.<sup>154</sup> A male or a female who is extravagant is unfit to hold managerial responsibilities.<sup>155</sup> According to Buddhism a factor that is most fundamental to success in management is the knowledge regarding proper limits in everything.<sup>156</sup> In other words it is restraint.

\* Many could be the problems that arise when a government attempts to implement this economic philosophy. Savings would be one such problem, for one could wonder as to how a poor third World country think of saving. Some who hold that though consumption is high in rich countries it is possible for them to save because their income too is quite high, argue that it is impossible for people in poor countries, where consumption is high and income is low to save. This sort of reasoning paves the way for an economic system which aims at increasing the income rate by increasing production and consumption. This economic system which is beneficial only to a few creates numerous other problems and, hence, has to be discarded. A Buddhist economic system takes into consideration the whole humanity and therefore, in it there is no room for misconceived values. It takes into consideration all living beings, the totality of material resources as well as the population, and also pays due attention to their mutual relations and dependence. In such a system which aims at complete personality culture, there is no way of consumption becoming the sole goal. A Buddhist economic system expects the people, irrespective of their level of income, to lead contented lives, fulfilling their obligations. Such life patterns help people to lead frugal lives and induce them to avoid falling into debt. This system encourages them to make some saving, however, small the savings may be. The 'till' in which a few coins and the 'pot' into which a handful of rice are put daily are common features in houses of poor Sinhala people, and they are examples that demonstrate the practical value of the Buddhist economic system which encourages saving.

#### 4.62

It is through making the maximum use of what he has and by avoiding waste and corruption that a Buddhist becomes able to

save. Avoidance of waste encouraged by the Buddhist economic system is well seen from the frugality and care with which a monk uses his robe,<sup>157</sup> and the bowl.<sup>158</sup> An incident which narrates how a millionaire's wife picked up a drop of ghee that fell on the ground demonstrates not her stinginess, but her frugality.<sup>159</sup> Besides, avoidance of all avenues that lead to dissipation of wealth too helps a Buddhist to conserve his earning. The Vinaya<sup>160</sup> shows the trouble taken by monks to keep their scanty belongings in proper condition. Proper maintenance makes things last long.<sup>161</sup> All these factors presented by the Buddhist economic philosophy contribute to produce a well contented society, leading a balanced life with a balanced economy.

These age old instructions are quite compatible with modern ideas, and what more is that these ideas help to adjust shortcomings that are found in modern ideas. The importance of stopping of waste and corruption has been often emphasised by heads of states. It has also been pointed out that to stop wastage it costs only about one-third or half the amount of money that goes to produce that amount which is wasted.<sup>162</sup> The magnitude of wastage that takes place in the industrial sector in Russia has been well described by the former President Gorbachev.<sup>163</sup> He also draws attention to mismanagement that is seen in this sphere which leads to the production of low-quality goods.<sup>164</sup>

## (E) ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

### (i) Co-operative Institution

#### 4.63

The state economic organization has to function through institutions which are compatible with it. The *Aggāṇa Sutta* clearly shows that all social institutions are man made, to fulfil social needs. This Sutta says also that there is a mutual relation between human conduct and these social institutions. The man not only has the ability to create new social institutions but to re-organize the already existing ones to suit his needs; this is responsibility, too. Unlike in the monastic order one cannot expect to see a fixed

structure in lay social institutions, for these institutions have to be quite flexible in keeping with the needs and conditions of times and climes.

#### 4.64

It is cooperative institution that seems to well accord with Buddhist economic policies. The collective ownership and the practice of sharing everything that are available in the community of monks support this view.<sup>165</sup> It is only in an institution where consumption and production could be carried out in common and collectively that sublime modes of living such as friendliness and compassion could be practised. This is evident even with regard to the practise of four modes of hospitality. One of these is 'atthacariya' or equality, another of the modes of hospitality, means treating others as equal to one's own self. This in other words is cooperation. Collective activities display the mutual bonds that exist among men in their pursuit of life. It becomes evident that in a society one cannot live in isolation, and that all are mutually bound to each other. It is also seen that this mutual relationship pervades all aspects of progress as well as decline; that economics and ethics, social relations and material progress, material progress and spiritual progress are all mutually dependant and related. In other words, a cooperative institution provides the opportunity to see all this inter-dependence, and hence such a movement is an aid to the blossoming of Buddhist ethics.

A cooperative movement is not purely a profit making concern. Service is its main aim. This service strengthens the bonds based on obligations and rights; its a practical demonstration of worship of directions referred to in *Sigalovada Sutta*, a characteristic of a virtuous person, and an opportunity for collective consumption. In such a movement the feeling, of 'I' and 'mine' gives way to 'we' and 'ours'. With the thinning of, I-ness, craving gets reduced and the 'soul' concept, too, gradually decreases. This paves the way to do meritorious and wholesome acts. As people's social positions are not measured by what they possess and consume, there will be neither self-praise nor disparagement of others. It will help one to

distinguish between 'needs' and 'wants'. All these show how meaningful is the cooperative institution to the Buddhist way of life.

As profit making is not the aim of a cooperative institution' it will not provide opportunity for violent and aggressive acts. As members are collectively responsible for all their acts room for corruption will be reduced to the minimum. Though profit making is not the primary concern, this is no bar to make reasonable profits; and whatever profit that is made will be equally distributed and will be for the benefit of the total membership and the institution. As there is no maldistribution, there will be no room for class distinctions and inequality in the society, and consequently there will be peace and understanding, closing all avenues for corruption, stealing etc. Whatever competition there would be among such co-operative institutions there would be disciplined competition and never will there be any reason for cut throat competition. There will be no manipulated scarcities. Without confining the aim to mere consumption, it will be possible for the collective membership to aim at far more higher goals.

#### 4.65

As personalities differ, so do their capabilities. Therefore, skill, knowledge, ability etc. lie scattered among the cooperative membership, and hence there is the opportunity to harmonize these various talents and make maximum use of them. There is common feeling, freedom, and all services are voluntary and, hence, it is natural that the membership would strive to work for the best interest of the institution. The cooperative movement could be extended to all spheres namely to consumption and production, and in production to all its areas covering industries agriculture etc. The success of the cooperative movement is well demonstrated by 'Kibuts' in Israel and 'communes' in China. Undoubtedly this is the best form of economic organization that accords well with the Buddhist economic philosophy.<sup>166</sup>

## (ii) PRIVATE SECTOR

#### 4.66

Man desires freedom. As he is quite egoistic he desires private ownership. Being bound by craving to his possession he relentlessly searches for opportunities for material self-improvement. This intensity of search varies from person to person depending on each one's nature. Among men there are experts, there are some aspiring for leadership and they venture alone and wish to shine in the society by achieving success in their ventures. It is the duty and the responsibility of the state to make use of those varied talents and capabilities of the people, by suitably organizing the private sector. Ignorance and craving are common human weaknesses. The state should take into account these common human weaknesses and organize the private sector, encouraging private enterprises in such a way that these human weaknesses would not have any adverse effect on the society in general. The state should set limits on profit-making, and prevent exploitation of labour, the consumer and natural resources. To do this successfully the state should not only be able to formulate laws in this regard, but should also have the machinery to enforce them.

Sometimes, at present, the private sector is more powerful than the public sector, and this is not quite favourable for the common man. Though it is reasonable to find that some through their special talents, becoming quite successful in their ventures, this should not be allowed to create injustice. Hoarding should not be allowed. Reasonable circulation of wealth and goods should be encouraged. It is clearly seen that the private sector in a Buddhist social milieu will be different from that in a capitalist system.<sup>167</sup> This is because human weaknesses would be at their minimum in such a society, and the people and the state would be able to control them. However, the development of the private sector should be within certain limits. Use of resources should well accord with accepted environmental policies and the use of labour should follow the accepted laws. Competition, advertisement and publicity should be allowed as long as they have no adverse effects on the consumer. The **Kutadanta Sutta** explains lucidly how the state

should help the private sector, so that the latter would make some beneficial contribution to the economic stability of the people as well as the state.

### (iii) PUBLIC SECTOR

#### 4.67

The provision of basic needs of the people namely, food, lodging, clothes and shelter is ultimately the responsibility of the state. The state should see that there is equal distribution,<sup>168</sup> for the state should always be mindful of the fact that the rise of a poor class necessarily leads to a decline in morals, to struggles and uprisings finally bringing about the destruction of the whole social fabric. Hence, it is necessary to monitor the rise of poverty by preparing a poverty index. For this it is necessary to take into consideration factors such as the general aims and purposes, quantity of resources, population, basic needs, cultural heritage as well as the global economic conditions and trends. Such an index should show the minimum economic level that would be conducive for man to build his personality and lead a secure and self-reliant life.

Similarly, the state should promulgate acts and laws that prevent all kinds of economic injustice, violence, aggression and exploitation. These acts and laws should be strictly enforced and all infringements should be remedied and sanctions should be imposed. To achieve success in this it is necessary to enlighten the people about the aims and goals of development and also means adopted towards their realization.

All essential services and mass scale industries should come under the state. For example, highways, transport, electricity should be in the public sector. Though in certain areas private sector and cooperative institutions could be commissioned to perform some function, this should be carried out under the supervision and guidance of the public sector. The state should take lessons from the past and effect remedial measures against possible failure,

natural calamities and disasters. If such calamities occur in spite of the remedial measures, then the state should immediately take relief measures to ease the burden and distress caused to the people.

An onerous responsibility that falls on the government is the creation of the laying of a firm foundation and the provision of the necessary training to build and develop the economy. Establishment of peace is a pre-requisite for this; and to have peace all kinds of conflicts, national, ethnic, religious, caste, class etc. should be removed. Everyone in the society should have equal rights and opportunities to progress without creating any problems to others. Hence, all obstacles to economic and social progress should be removed, and among such obstacles the most fundamental is a dictatorial system of administration.

The form of government that would be most conducive to progress is a truly democratic one. In such a government those responsible for governing should be the ones who are duly elected by the people, and they should be primarily concerned with the welfare of the people. All new amendments to the existing norms should be approved by a referendum.

Righteousness, though it is in minority, should always triumph over unrighteousness; rules should be flexible for the benefit of the people; there should be equal opportunity for education training in different skills and crafts and for blossoming of numerous other potentials.

### (iv) A UNIFIED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR

#### 4.68

According to the Buddhist point of view the use of managerial and other skills that exist in the private sector under close supervision and direction of the public sector could be fruitful in producing an efficient economic system. The *Kutadanta Sutta* hints regarding such unified institutions. There it was mentioned how the state should help and encourage the private sector by

providing the basic necessities for fruitful employment; and then how government coffers should be filled by reasonable taxation. As the state is providing the basic capital it necessarily has to supervise the private sector activities.

4.69

Thus the Buddhist economic philosophy provides opportunity for four types of institutions namely, (i) cooperative institutions (ii) Private sector institutions (iii) public sector institutions and (iv) unified public and private sector institutions. It is the responsibility of the economic experts to make whatever adjustments that are necessary to these institutions. When the economic systems that prevail in the present day democratic and socialistic countries are combined it would come quite close to the system advocated by the Buddhist economic philosophy.

4.70

The government should take steps to operate these fourfold institutions effectively and also to strengthen the family institution by assuring its economic security. To achieve this the mutual relations among family members should be bolstered and strengthened. The services and the responsibilities shouldered by the wife should be properly evaluated. For example, if she is a working - wife then she should be provided with maternity leave and so on. These relations should be fostered in such a way that most of the problems that become a burden on the society would be solved within the family unit itself.

## Chapter 5

# 5. BUDDHIST ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY: THE SUMMING UP

5.1

Men in all societies and countries are always attempting to improve their existing conditions. From this it is possible to conclude that all men, in general, presume that the present is unsatisfactory and hence, not conducive to contentment. As they think it is the non-fulfilment of their expectations that leads to this dissatisfaction, they begin to inquire into what these unfulfilled expectations are. They broadly identify and divide them into two categories as material needs and services. Their needs are limitless and hence, more and more goods and services become necessary. Therefore, in all present day economics it is generally accepted that if man is to be made contented more and more goods and services should be produced. Thus, all economic systems are attempting to put forward ways and means of producing goods and services to satisfy the limitless needs by using limited resources. More goods and services are produced to promote consumption. Increase in consumption is considered a sign of development and hence, consumption becomes the goal of all human endeavour. <sup>(1)</sup>

5.2

If the assumption that to obtain happiness there should be more and more goods and services is correct, then men who have such goods and services as well as those in societies where

consumption is at a very high level, should be extremely happy. But this is not the case. For example, Norway is one of the most developed countries. Yet, as Lief Sandholt<sup>2</sup> shows, in Norway there has been a rapid increase in incidents of suicide, and so it is with regard to alcoholism and drug addiction. Grievous crimes and murder increased twofold and three-fold respectively. He concludes that men now realize that there is no relation between material progress, and contentment and happiness.

### 5.3

The **Rattapala Sutta**<sup>4</sup> also supports the view that it does not necessarily mean that those who have their needs fulfilled are more contented. The **Dhammapada**<sup>5</sup> says that man is not contented even by a shower of gold coins. Once the Buddha said a man would not be satisfied even if a mountain of gold were to become twice its size. The **Aggañña Sutta** clearly shows that even the primitive man was not contented, and that this discontentment led to many other new problems.<sup>7</sup> So this discontentment is an eternal problem, which prevailed in primitive times and continues unabated even in the present, and men die discontented.<sup>8</sup> As there is no direct relation between increased consumption and contentment, this problem calls for deeper analysis.

### 5.4

It is easy to understand that unpleasant feelings generate unhappiness. These unpleasant feelings are not limited to a particular sphere of experience such as that related to acquisition of goods and services. Among unpleasant feelings, painful physical feelings could easily be detected. Sorrow, dejection, regret, distress, oppression, mental fatigue are all unpleasant feelings. In the sphere of social relations, association with those who are not dear and dissociation from those who are dear are also unpleasant experiences. Loss of wealth, defeat, ill-fame, too, are same. Even birth, decay and death are oppressive.<sup>9</sup> All these are unpleasant experiences that one undergoes irrespective of nationality, religion, caste, social status and so on. All aspects of

existence consist of unpleasant feelings and experiences. Does it mean that life contains only such unpleasant experiences?

### 5.5

Definitely it is not so. Tasty food gives relish to the tongue. Good clothes please the eye and the heart. Association with the dear, victory and fame all make the heart happy. **Sukhavagga**<sup>10</sup> enumerates twenty-six kinds of happiness, thus showing the prevalence of happiness. But the question is how far can man sustain these kinds of happy experiences. Very often these forms of happiness are evanescent. Whatever their period of duration is, all forms of happiness fade away. This is nature. This fading away creates sorrow, unhappiness, dejection. Unhappy experiences are naturally unpleasant,<sup>11</sup> and happy experiences are unpleasant due to their being subject to change.<sup>12</sup> There is no need of much profound wisdom to understand these two kinds of unpleasant experiences; nor is there any need of a wise person to explain these. It is seen that man has to experience yet the acute form of unpleasantness.

### 5.6

If a man can continuously obtain objects that make him happy, then why cannot he become content? Now, man has found a new culture that produces goods which are discarded after using once when required. Alvin Taffler<sup>13</sup> calls this the 'throwaway culture'. Is it not possible for man to attain contentment through this culture? It is easy to understand this through a popular Sinhalese saying. Why does sweet cake become bitter? This contains a truth that could be grasped only by an intelligent person who makes a special inquiry into this. Therein the 'sweet cake' symbolizes any pleasant object, item or service meant for consumption. It is seen that the object, the relevant sense faculty and the consciousness that arises depending on them; the contact resulting from the meeting of these three, are all, severally and collectively, characterized by impermanency.<sup>14</sup> This shows that everything is subject to rise, change and passing away.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, there is no

time for happiness to prevail. Nothing could change this true nature. Thus, it is necessary to conclude that all compounded things are impermanent.<sup>16)</sup>

## 5.7

Only a highly enlightened person could understand this change as being 'natural'. As it is a natural phenomena, it is 'nature'. He who fails to see this 'nature' conceives an unbroken continuity. This leads him to see something permanent within what is impermanent. This something or substance which he conceives to be permanent, he takes as the soul or self. He develops an attachment to it, considering it as "this is me" 'this is mine', 'This is my soul. 'Through pleasant things - wife and children, wealth, even views he appreciates-which he considers as his own, he derives happiness. He clings to them and attempts to possess them, and keep them in the same way. But they all are subject to change, and he fails to keep them as he desires to keep them. This change makes him tremble. He gets disturbed and this causes sorrow, dejection and mental weariness. This mental weariness is not caused by the mere change of the sensory object. It is caused by one's failure to possess it in the way he wants to have it. Hence, this is common to all objects of clinging. This sorrow, suffering or mental distress is caused by impermanency of phenomena, the egoistic view which arises due to failure to see this impermanency and the craving, based on this egoism, which leads to clinging. As this unhappiness<sup>17</sup> which is caused by clinging pervades all composite things (**sankhara**), it is referred to as '**sankhara dukkha**'. Hence it is necessary to conclude that the whole world is established in dukkha.<sup>18</sup>

## 5.8

Unlike **dukkha** - (suffering as pain i.e. normal suffering) and **viparinama - dukkha** (suffering due to change), **sankhara-dukkha** (suffering caused by misconception regarding all formations) could only be properly grasped by a person of sharp discriminative ability. It is suffering caused by one getting attached

and then clinging to formations (**sankhara**) without realizing their true nature. One who enjoys them without any attachment or clinging undergoes no suffering. An Arahant is totally free from such suffering.

Thus, an intelligent person understands that suffering or unhappiness or dissatisfaction is due to the lack of proper understanding of the true nature of phenomena and consequent clinging to them. Realizing that this unhappiness is within his own experience, he sees the futility of trying to see an external cause for it. Then he accepts that this unhappiness is dependently arisen, and that when conditions that cause its arising are no more, unhappiness, too, vanishes.<sup>19</sup>

## 5.9

However, as man is deeply bogged in the mire of ignorance it is extremely difficult for him to understand the true nature of things.<sup>20</sup> And, as he has persistently clung to sensory objects for long, it is difficult to give up clinging.<sup>21</sup> Though it is not possible to eradicate ignorance and craving immediately, it could be done gradually through earnest effort;<sup>22</sup> and this has to be done, for it is only then, there will be real happiness and satisfaction. The intelligent man knowing very well that none will decline in any aspect if everything could be accomplished through wishful thinking and prayer,<sup>23</sup> will find a way to the goal and tread on it.<sup>24</sup> Knowing quite well that one has to follow the path himself without any external help<sup>25</sup> and also knowing that the only help a good person could give is to show this path<sup>26</sup>, he would put forth effort, follow this path and finally go beyond suffering.<sup>27</sup> This is why the Buddha declared that the Noble Truth of suffering is briefly the five aggregates of clinging; that he teaches only about suffering and its cessation; that one should abandon dependence on all external help and strive himself, for everyone has the ability to do so. Then, how does an economic philosophy become relevant to this? It is seen that ordinary **dukkha** or suffering in general, and **dukkha** due to change to an extent, could be overcome or reduced by indulging in the use of necessities. Similarly, use of these basic

necessities is fundamental to achieve material stability that is necessary to embark upon the path leading to the total elimination of suffering and realizing the supreme bliss. Hence, the economy becomes quite relevant to this process. Therefore it is necessary to understand how this aspect is dealt within the canonical teachings.

#### 5.10

People differ in their capabilities and potential. The Buddha compared the society to a lotus pond.<sup>28</sup> In this pond some lotus buds are under water, some have just arisen above water. Some others are well above water. Similarly, there are fully bloomed lotuses standing untouched by water. So it is in the human society, with people of different levels of maturity. Some are completely immersed in defilements and others not so deeply immersed. Thus there is difference in faculties as well as in personalities.<sup>29</sup> Hence, personal defilements have to be removed little by little, from time to time.<sup>30</sup> The time taken for this will differ from person to person depending on his nature.<sup>31</sup> The human society can be broadly divided into two as consisting of people who are capable of following a straight short cut and those who are not so capable.<sup>32</sup> Their conduct, too, differs in accordance with the vocation they adopt. Those who prefer to take the short cut adopt the pure life of celibacy, the way of life suited to those who have renounced household life; others lead the way of life of householders.

#### 5.11

Those who earnestly desire to take the short-cut, give up household life considering it to be an obstacle and enter recluship.<sup>33</sup> This calls for strict sense-control and training. They completely abstain from sexual relations,<sup>34</sup> and craving for food,<sup>35</sup> which are two strong aspects of desire. They give up all activities pertaining to production, for these activities lead to individuality, and engage in collective use of what they obtain. If they find hard to obtain the basic necessities, they opt to live on fruits obtained

from forest, to reside in caves, mountain caverns and grottoes, and use discarded rags as robes. Thus, they begin to lead extremely simple lives without being a burden on anyone.<sup>36</sup> Being conscious even of the minutest fault, they live mindful of their spiritual purity, remembering very well their dependence on others.<sup>37</sup> Besides striving to achieve their aim, the other main activity in which they engage is 'service for others'. As they desire to avoid obstacles to their way of life, they keep aloof from social institutions as far as possible, and lead independent lives.<sup>38</sup> They even adjust their external appearance to suit their life pattern.<sup>39</sup> Thus living in the community of monks, they aspire to rise to noble level.

#### 5.12

However, only a few are capable of following this noble path, for various conditions such as personality and faculty differences. Samsaric habits, material and social factors function as fundamental determinant factors. Majority is like lotus buds remaining either under water, on the level of water or just above it. They do not have the required understanding about the path to freedom and, hence, lack in determination and effort. They do not wish to abandon their craving for food, sensual pleasures and possessions.<sup>40</sup> Hence, they would require varying periods of time to achieve the desired goal. However, the doors to freedom are equally open to them, too, just as it is for those who have chosen the vocation of totally pure celibacy. This is the vocation of householder, which takes a longer time, but yet reaching the same goal.

#### 5.13

Even one who selects the vocation of a householder<sup>41</sup> obtains the opportunity of becoming a 'noble disciple' (*ariyasavaka*).<sup>42</sup> The Buddha himself has declared so in such suttas as the *Dhammika* and *Sigalovada*. However, Max Weber makes a vain attempt to show that the position is otherwise.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, this point needs further clarification. The designation 'noble

disciple' is meant to connote a fixed position in the religious life, to show that complete emancipation is open to householders as well and to illustrate that both the recluse and the householders are equally capable of treading the noble path. The difference between them lies in the duration of the time taken to reach the goal and the life patterns adopted. If the Weberian view that there is no 'fixed status' for lay in the religious community is correct, then it has to be accepted that there is no social life and consequently no economic life in Buddhism for the laity. But Buddhism clearly says that there is noble discipleship in lay-life,<sup>44</sup> that laity too are assured of emancipation<sup>45</sup> and that laity too are capable of following the path.<sup>46</sup> Besides, Suttas such as **Gihisamicipatipada**, **Bahukara**, **Asamayasaṃyama**, **Dasadhamma** etc. show that the Buddha himself has declared that the monks striving for emancipation, too, are dependent on the support given by the laity to obtain basic needs. All these make it evident that the householders have a fixed status in the religious community. Hence, there is also a Buddhist economic philosophy for them presented in the canon. Right livelihood is one of the items in the Noble Eightfold Path. The **Mahacattariṣaṅga Sutta**<sup>47</sup> presents two levels at which right livelihood could be pursued, one of which is specifically meant for the laity. Besides, there are many other suttas that explain how the laity should put into practice right livelihood.<sup>48</sup> All these evidence make it impossible for anyone to deny the existence in the canon of an economic philosophy for the laity.

## 5.14

Nikaya literature<sup>49</sup> speaks of two types of laity. Of these one is the white-clad celibate. (**odāṭṭavasana gihī bhikkhū**) The other which form the majority is the pleasure-enjoying householders. (**gihī no kamabhogī**) The **Migasala Sutta**<sup>50</sup> of the Anguttaranikaya very clearly explains that both these categories, are qualified to become 'noble disciples. Herein, the right livelihood which is approved for lay householders, demonstrate the Buddhist economic system applicable for a Buddhist way of life.

The Nikayas clearly point out that to lead a life of a pleasure enjoying householder it is necessary to have economic stability. It has already been pointed out in the **Ina Sutta**<sup>51</sup> that poverty is a cause of misery for such householders. The **Sigālovada Sutta**<sup>52</sup> says one should start the life of a householder only after collecting enough wealth. In the same vein the **Dhammapada**<sup>53</sup> says that one should earn enough when young, lest one would have to regret in old age. A similar admonition is found also in the Jataka.<sup>54</sup> While the **Anāpāna Sutta**<sup>55</sup> lists economic stability as the first of the four kinds of worldly happiness, the **Pattakamma Sutta**<sup>56</sup> also says that having wealth is one of the most desirable things in the world.

The **Vyagghapajja Sutta**<sup>57</sup> cites economic stability achieved through effort, and protection of wealth so acquired as two of the great blessings. The **Vaddhi Sutta**<sup>58</sup> that refers to ten factors leading to the progress of a noble person, assigns the first five of these factors to matters pertaining to economic and materialistic aspects of life. It further says that one who progresses in these ten factors acquires the highest meaning and essence of life.<sup>59</sup> In a similar manner the **Cakkavattisihanada** and the **Kutadanta Suttas** show that social progress too is fundamentally dependent on economic foundation.<sup>60</sup> These suttas also show how the economic decline causes degeneration in individual and social ethics leading to destruction of social institutions. The **Kutadanta Sutta** emphasizes that this whole process of decline is dependently originated.<sup>61</sup>

It has to be said that the attempt made by some critics to represent Buddhism as considering poverty as a blessing is the result of their ignorance about canonical Buddhism. It should be well understood that while such a view is totally wrong, the Suttas quite clearly state that economic security is the foundation for the progress of a noble disciple. The **Asamayasaṃyama Sutta** as well as the **Bahukara Sutta**<sup>62</sup> state that even a monk could strive for spiritual progress only if he is assured of maintenance. This is further supported by the **Samicipatipada Sutta**<sup>63</sup> and **Pattakamma Sutta**<sup>64</sup> which say that it is the bounden duty of a layman to

provide the monks with their basic requirements. This should be so because monks do not engage themselves with activities connected with production of goods.

### 5.15

In order to firmly stabilize the economic foundation an individual should correctly identify the aims of consumption. Three such objectives or purposes could be seen from references in the Nikayas and the Vinaya. These are:

- (i) Maintenance or continued existence. Acquisition of the basic needs for this purpose.
- (ii) comfortable living and
- (iii) strengthening the foundation for full personality development. And, for this
  - (a) fulfilment of material needs, and
  - (b) through this attainment of mental satisfaction is required.

The *Cullavagga*<sup>65</sup> in connection with lodgings, refers to these three aims as '*lenattha*', '*sukhattham*' and '*Jhayitunca vipassitum*'. *Lenattha* refers to the necessity of a suitable place of lodging. *Sukhattha* connotes comfortable living, and *Jhayitunca vipassitum* refers to meditation for the purpose of spiritual culture. It is seen that the mental satisfaction resulting from the fulfilment of the first two purposes provides the foundation for full personality culture.

### 5.16

As the present economic system takes consumption as its goal, it is necessary to understand the three above mentioned aims in order to get a clear view of the Buddhist position. Buddhist canonical texts clearly state that all men dislike death and like to live;<sup>66</sup> that all are dependent on food.<sup>67</sup> Four such nutriment are mentioned.<sup>68</sup> The texts refer to an incident where the Buddha delayed preaching till the listener was fed. As food prevents hunger,

helps to maintain the body and the continuity of life, taking of food is considered right<sup>69</sup>, whereas tormenting the body by not providing it with necessary nutrients is considered 'wrong'. The *Kutadanta Sutta* cites non-provision of basic needs as a primary cause of numerous social problems.<sup>70</sup> The *Cakkavatti Sihanada Sutta*<sup>71</sup> refers to 'righteous protection and care' as an important duty of a Universal Monarch. Houses and lodgings are necessary to protect oneself from inclement weather, from insects, mosquitoes and reptiles, from sun and rain,<sup>72</sup> and this is why provision of houses is highly praised.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, clothes are necessary to withstand adverse effects of climate and other hindrances, and also to cover nakedness.<sup>74</sup> Medicine is essential to keep away diseases.<sup>75</sup> Hence, acquisition of these basic requirements is the primary aim of consumption.

### 5.17

Canonical Buddhism admits also the fact that it is necessary not merely just to eke out some sort of an existence, but to lead a good comfortable life, and this is the position with regard to both the laity and clergy. However, what exactly is meant by 'comfortable life' may differ according to the vocation one selects, whether it is household life or recluse life. What is meant by this for the monks is elaborately dealt with in the *Vinaya* and in a number of suttas. The *Sabbasava Sutta*<sup>76</sup> says that certain defilements are to be got rid of by the use of basic requirements. In this context the term '*phasuviharataya*'<sup>77</sup> (meaning for the comfort of living) is used with regard to food (*pindapata*). In the *Vinaya* the word '*Sukhattham*' (for happiness) is used in connection with lodgings (*vihara*). What is meant in these instances is the use of basic requirements in a way pleasing to the mind and body. The monks at the beginning lived in places which were not at all comfortable<sup>78</sup>, and the Buddha subsequently approved five kinds of dwellings which were better equipped for them.<sup>79</sup> By approving the use of colour-washing and other methods of decoration the Buddha appears to have acknowledged that dwellings should be not only for bodily comfort, but also for mental comfort.<sup>80</sup> The Buddha specifically says that dwellings should be aesthetically

pleasant.<sup>81</sup> On this it is possible to assume that this aesthetic beauty should be more emphasized in the case of dwellings of householders.

### 5.18

In this regard four of the ten reasons that prompted the Buddha to promulgate vinaya-rules become important.<sup>82</sup> Some of these are (i) for the well-being of the monks (ii) for the comfortable living of the well-behaved monks (iii) for the rousing of faith in those who have no faith and (iv) to increase the faith of those who have already developed faith. This shows the importance attached to 'comfortable living'. Even the external appearance of a monk was considered important. The **Dhammacetiya Sutta** clearly brings out how pleasant the monks were in their appearance.<sup>83</sup> They were in total contrast to Brahmins who were repugnant to look at. Prof. Jotiya Dhiresekera<sup>84</sup> commenting on the relevant passage of this sutta says:

"In the Pali original of this there is a phrase which is of interest to us: **na cakkhum bandhanti janassa dassanaya**; This means that they do not catch the eye of the onlooker. Here, we have one definite notion of beauty. An object of beauty is something which we are pleased to see. Hence, we get the term - **pasadika** - pleasant or pleasing used over and over again with reference to the dress and demeanour of the Buddhist monk. Of personal cleanliness, not only for their own sake but also because of their social implications."

Life should be comfortable and healthy, both in body and mind. The **Dhammapada**<sup>85</sup> says that health is the highest gain. The **Atthassadvara jataka** also refers to health as the first of the six factors conducive to progress. The **Vinaya**<sup>87</sup> elaborately explains how monks should maintain not only personal cleanliness, but also cleanliness of the surroundings. The **Devadaha Sutta**<sup>88</sup> also clearly expresses the Buddha's views on monks' enjoying righteously obtained comfort. Prof. Mahinda Palihavadana<sup>89</sup> commenting on this says that the Buddha's view on comfortable living was relatively advanced.

### 5.19

The canon allows a wider margin of comfort for the lay people. The **Rasiya Sutta**<sup>90</sup> commenting on the handling of righteously earned wealth says, 'one makes oneself happy, pleases oneself, distributes and engages in meritorious' acts (**attanam sukheti pineti samvibhajati puññani karoti**). The verbs '**Sukheti**' and '**pineti**' refer to physical and mental happiness. To have mental happiness it is necessary to develop cordial social relations. The verb '**samvibhajati**' meaning 'distributes' seems to suggest the sharing of wealth with related people. Meritorious acts are conducive to make samsaric existence meaningful and happy. It is by taking into consideration these diverse aspects that Prof. Jotiya Dhirasekera<sup>(91)</sup> observes that '..... the simple life which the Buddha advocated was not without standards'. As pointed out by Ven. Prof. Walpola Rahula Thera<sup>(92)</sup> the Buddha did not forget to take into consideration even the tender human emotions that contribute to make household life happy and comfortable. The aspect is further emphasized in the **Sigalovada Sutta** in promoting harmonious living between husband and wife.<sup>93</sup> The **Vyagghapajja Sutta**<sup>94</sup> refers to one Dighajanu who enjoyed sensual pleasures, but yet who was desirous of following the Buddha's teaching. According to the **Dhammika Sutta**<sup>95</sup> these things become unfit for a layman only on special occasions such as when observing the eight precepts. On other days moderate indulgence in these is not prohibited.

### 5.20

Thus it is seen that consumption is not for the purpose of merely eking out an existence. It, according to Buddhism, envisages a moderately comfortable life. Many factors necessitated such a life.

- (a) to lead a comfortable day to day life,
- (b) to maintain good, cordial social relations,
- (c) for reasons of health,
- (d) to satisfy human emotions
- (e) because of appreciation of beauty

- (f) for the well-being of samsaric existence and
- (g) as righteous happiness is accepted

#### 5.21

If sustenance is poor and life conditions are not comfortable, then there is mental restlessness. Even if they are fulfilled, if there is neither physical or mental readiness then it is not possible to prepare the way to the supreme goal. This is where meditation and development of insight become important.<sup>96</sup> Hence, physical and mental adjustment is the third aspect to consumption. The **Mahavagga**<sup>97</sup> mentions ten conditions that are necessary to make a place suitable for a dwelling. These are: (i) not very far from the village (ii) not very close to the village (iii) of where people can come and go, (iv) ease of access for those who wish to visit, (v) not crowded during the day (vi) quiet during the night (vii) free from noise (viii) pervade by solitude (ix) undisturbed by people. (x) suitable for seclusion. The first two conditions are necessary for easy sustenance. 3rd, 4th and 9th specially pertain to comfortable living. The rest are conducive to lead a holy life of celibacy, engaged in mind culture and insight development. It has already been pointed out that consumption is not the goal, for it is said that one should engage in consumption understanding the way to emancipation (**nissaranapanno**).<sup>98</sup> The goal is enlightenment, attainment of worthiness, freedom. This is why the **Sabbasava Sutta** cites also three other purposes of using food, lodging and medicine. Food is for the purpose of leading a noble life, lodging for solitude and medicine for good health.<sup>99</sup> The **Asamaya Samaya Sutta**<sup>100</sup> also shows that purpose of maintaining good health and searching for easy sustenance is to help one's striving to attain the final goal i.e., emancipation.

#### 5.22

All the above mentioned evidence pertain to the life of a monk. In this regard there is canonical evidence that pertains to the life of a household too. For example the **Vyagghapajja Sutta**<sup>101</sup> speaks of eight factors, four of which are conducive to worldly well-being

and four to the well-being of life after. At the end of the Sutta there is a stanza which refers to confidence, virtue, charity and wisdom, the regular nature of which is said to pave the way for well-being in life here after. The culture and practice of these qualities are not really outside one's day-to-day economic activities (see vide Supra chp. 3). Take, for example virtue of **sila**. It connotes disciplined and right verbal and physical behaviour. Abstention from stealing is one instance of disciplined physical behaviour, and it is included under right livelihood. As stated in Suttas such as **Pattakamma** generosity towards other members of the society starting with parents is charity or **caga**. Happiness arising from faultless conduct (**anavajja sukha**) referred to in the **Anana Sutta** the concept of '**ayatana paribhojana**' (collective consumption) referred to in the **Pattakamma Sutta**, and the symbolic reference to the two-eyed person in the **Dvicakkhu Sutta** all pertain to the third aim of the householder's economy. Thus the necessary conclusion one has to draw is that, in lay life too, just as in the life of monks consumption is connected with the realization of emancipation.

#### 5.23

On the above mentioned facts, it is possible to make the following three conclusions.

- (i) consumption is primarily for sustenance
- (ii) consumption is for comfortable living and
- (iii) consumption is also for spiritual development.

Hence, in Buddhist economic philosophy consumption is not the goal, but the means to reach the goal. The third objective shows how this goal could be reached.

#### 5.24

One who cannot obtain the basic requirements for mere survival is a person who is engaged in a battle of life and death. Hence, he will not have the required mental ability to distinguish

between right and wrong. Poverty will force him either to beg or to borrow. If he borrows he will never be able to free himself from shackles of debt. Perhaps, he would be forced to indulge in corrupt practices to eke out his living, and he will not find time to think of spiritual development. For him, some relief from his economic burden would be the kind of emancipation he desires. He will not be able to lead a happy married life. Then how silly it is to expect him to discharge his obligations or contribute to the development of the economy. He will merely be a burden on the society.

It was his failure to acquire wealth at the proper time that pushed him into this pathetic plight. If this was not due to his laziness or some physical defect, then certainly it must have been due to unemployment. If there are no job opportunities in the public sector or under private individuals there may have been other obstacles that prevented him from getting self-employed. Lack of capital is such an obstacle. This situation could be aggravated by lack of training and skill or even academic qualifications. Therefore, these also fall into the category of basic needs. One has to acquire all these when he is young, perhaps in his childhood. To acquire these guidance of the elders is a must, and this responsibility falls on the parents and the rulers. This is why the **Sigalovada Sutta**<sup>102</sup> says that it is the duty of parents to provide the children sustenance, medical care, education, vocational training and finally even some legacy or dowry. Here it is seen as the necessity of a stable family. Similarly for some reasons it is seen that the responsibility of providing employment, equal distribution of capital, and the organization of the administration in a manner that would be conducive to the provision of basic needs to all fall upon the government.<sup>103</sup> This is the responsibility of the rulers in organizing its foundation. According to Buddhism neither the parents nor the state could shirk these responsibilities.

## 5.25

Inability to secure a comfortable life also makes an individual a 'useless person', both to himself as well as to the society. Though

he may not be a burden on the society, the society will gain nothing from him. He will participate in consumption, contributing nothing constructive or creative. He will have no opportunity to give thought to spiritual development, for he will be fully engrossed in finding ways for his sustenance. He will feel restless, and insecure, and this will make his life tiresome and boring. He will fail to develop good social relations and often he would fall into debt. A man who could overcome this situation could experience the happiness derived from enjoying his wealth (**bhoga sukha**).

However, 'comfortable living' could be explained in a variety of ways. For example, poverty would be a cause of misery in a particular society, and in another it could be a factor contributing to ease and comfort. It is important to understand this fact very clearly. Right livelihood is determined by how one acts in a situation like this. Right livelihood is preceded by Right view, and it is the correct indicator in selecting the kind of comfortable life. What is meant by comfortable living is acquisition of happiness that has to be acquired by ones wealth and possessions. The Suttas dealing with this factor persistently harp on the fact that all wealth and possession should be acquired through righteous means. This means that, according to the Buddhist point of view a comfortable life cannot be had through wealth and possessions acquired by unrighteous methods. Unrighteous acquisitions can be that which is obtained cunningly through stealing, or through fraud. If these malpractices and offences come to light, the social as well as legal consequences would be extremely severe. Even if such acts are not exposed, the offenders will have to live with a guilty consciousness, and will have no peace of mind. This shows that the mere fact of having wealth does not assure happiness connected with wealth.<sup>(101)</sup> It is only through wealth acquired by righteous means that one can experience the enjoyment derived from use of wealth (**bhoga sukha**).

## 5.26

Thus the right view regarding 'comfortable living' connotes the righteous acquisition of wealth and the righteous consumption of

the righteously obtained wealth. Many Suttas such as *Anana*, *Pattakamma*, *Vyagghapajja*, *Rasiya* etc. deal elaborately with the righteous acquisition and righteous consumption of what is righteously acquired (see supra. chp 3).

## 5.27

One who misunderstands 'comfortable living' would fall into numerous difficulties through over-consumption. It might even lead to physical distress and ailments. People who suffer due to over-consumption are found not only in affluent societies, but even among the affluent minority in poor countries. The constant mental stress resulting from insatiability and discontentment is the other calamity one will be forced to undergo. Over-consumption will spur one to imitate others, to compete with others, and consequently to strive to increase earnings even through corrupt avenues. It will also be an obstacle to one's spiritual progress, and would take the individual further away from the goal. Therefore, according to Buddhism, comfortable living is that sort of life where one engages in consumption without greed and attachment.

By misunderstanding this concept an individual becomes conceited with wealth, and disregards and neglects even his own kith and kin. He makes wealth the criterion and engages in self-praise and disparagement of others. The *Padhana Sutta*<sup>(105)</sup> condemns this as an evil attitude. This results in creating class divisions in the society and also generates egoism which forms one of the obstacles on the path that is extremely difficult to eradicate. A person conceited with wealth tends to engage in corrupt practices and abuse of power. He will try to cover up all his faults and shortcomings by his wealth; and this depicts the evils of the capitalist economic system.

Though an individual who enjoys his wealth through greed considers it as a comfort and happiness, he, as Eric Fromm has pointed out gets alienated; this is because the desire for acquisition of more and more wealth overwhelms him. Hence, he fails to derive the real enjoyment of wealth and finally becomes a mere puppet of wealth.

One who is infatuated considers consumption itself as the goal. He gets emersed and bogged in it and fails to develop his human qualities. His potentials fade away, and not really seeing the noble path he fails to realize emancipation.

## 5.28

It has already been pointed out that one can derive happiness of enjoyment of wealth only if production and consumption are righteous. Virtue, labour and non-aggression are three basic factors of righteous production. (see supra 3.2) Virtue or morality is primarily concerned with the five precepts. According to Buddhism even economic progress is dependently originating, and hence, economic progress and labour are mutually dependent. This labour, as it has been pointed out in many Suttas, should be obtained righteously and used within proper limits. Thus comfortable living should become meaningful through the correct understanding of proper limits. This is what one means when it is said that right livelihood is preceded by right view. The basic factor that regulates the Buddhist economic system is this knowledge regarding proper limits of consumption. A proper understanding of this factor, in the way it is defined in Buddhism, will not only help to understand what really Buddhist economic philosophy is all about, but will also help to solve the dilemmas that prevail in the present day economy.

Attention has been drawn to this factor by Dr. Rafael M. Salas, The Executive Director of the U. N. Fund for Population Activities in his Convocation Lecture at the University of Colombo in 1976. He says:<sup>106</sup>

"But I believe that what is more important is that the people of this country are blessed by one other resource that stands above all others - the ethic of restraint. Development in its broadest integration demands the consciousness of limits to enable individuals to act without degrading themselves and their environment and so prevent further individual or national growth. This ethic of restraint is linked to a respect

for the value of all life specially human life, its authentic fulfilment and the true meaning of happiness. Material goods alone, however necessary, cannot achieve this, nor can they be sought unless people themselves adopt attitudes which enable them to restrain excessive desires that ultimately lead to degradation. A man of radiant Enlightenment two thousand five hundred years ago taught us that: 'whoever in the world overcomes this base, unruly craving, from him sorrows fall away like water drops from a lotus leaf'.

## 5.29

After making this insightful observation Dr. Salas poses this pertinent question.

"Is not this inner discipline the essentially appropriate ethic of the twenty-first century? And has not Sri Lanka a part to play in helping to impart this to all the nations as mankind approaches the next Millenium?"<sup>107</sup>

It has to be observed that in the foregoing study an attempt was made to understand what the correct reaction should be with regard to sense objects and what the right attitude should be to consumption. In this connection attention was focussed on such important concepts as consciousness of proper limits and sense restraint, as they are defined and explained in a large number of Suttas. Through this study it became clear how consciousness of limits and sense restraint operate as forces that regulate an individual's activities pertaining to both spiritual and material progress which have Nibbana or emancipation as the final goal. This ethic is important to the whole mankind, irrespective of the religious beliefs they hold. Hence, it is most appropriate to consider and evaluate how Buddhism has accepted it and what its influence could be on mankind in general. And for this purpose the best source would be the Metta Sutta.<sup>108</sup>

## 5.30

It is only after one obtains a fair understanding about the nature of existence that one begins to accept the importance of

consciousness of limits and attempts to restrain oneself. The present day people in the world has obtained this understanding about existence through experience they have had as a consequence of the situations that came about as a result of scientific and technological developments and population explosion. On the other hand the **Mahacattarisaka Sutta** shows how a Buddhist, understanding the true nature of existence through analysis, voluntarily opts to accept this policy of sense restraint. The final stanza of the **Metta Sutta** which run as

**"Ditthinca anupagamma silava  
dassanena sampanno  
kamesu vineyya gedham  
nahi jatu gabbhaseyyam punareti"**

(The virtuous one endowed with vision, not resorting to views, having restrained craving for unusual pleasures would never come to be born again.)

Herein the phrases '**ditthinca anupagamma** (not resorting to views), **silava** (virtuous or morally perfect one), and '**dassanena sampañño** (endowed with vision) are of special significance. Herein **ditthi** denotes a futile attempt one makes to describe one's experiences according to ideas that he firmly believes. The present experiences should be analysed observing their true nature. As a Buddhist sees it, the imminent problem he faces is **Dukkha**, or the conflict, the non-satisfactoriness. When analyzing, it is clearly seen that this **dukkha** is causally originated, this is so with regard to both individual dukkha and social dukkha; or personal dukkha or institutional dukkha. When one, without dragging on any belief about a creation or any kind of determinism, begins to realize the impermanency of all compounded things, he understands the folly of upholding a soul-view, and consequently his attachment to impermanent things gets diminished. The complete eradication of this attachment or clinging is emancipation, and to experience this emancipation one needs to strive hard. When he realizes that his responsibility is to attain arahantship by intelligently following a systematic practice, there takes place an attitudinal change in him.

Along with this attitudinal change there takes place also a behavioural change. Perfection of morality connotes this change that takes place in speech and action as a result of the true vision he obtains regarding phenomena. The **Metta Sutta** explains the qualities of a person who has undergone such attitudinal and behavioural changes. He is capable (**sakko**), straight forward in verbal and physical actions (**uju**) straight forward in mental actions (**suju**), amenable to advice (**suvaca**), tender (**mudu**) not conceited (**anatimani**), happy at heart (**santussako**) of easy maintenance (**subhara**) with few involvements (**appakicco**), with simple ways of living (**sallahukavutti**), restrained in senses (**santindriyo**), clever (**nipako**), unobtrusive (**appagabbho**), unattached to families (**kulesu ananugiddho**), and not committing any act, however minor it would be, for which he would be blamed by the wise (**na ca khuddam samacare kinci yena vinnupare upavadeyyum**). This is the behavioural change that is effected by correct attitudinal change.

### 5.31

A Buddhist state would put into effect this kind of a Buddhist economic philosophy. Can an economic philosophy of this nature be practised in Sri Lanka which is said to be the headquarters of Theravada Buddhism, but now emphasized as a multi-racial, multi-religious nation? As this is a question that deserves a detailed discussion it is not included within the scope of this present study. Hence, what is examined herein is whether this philosophy should be made the foundation of an economic system of any nation, irrespective of the religion it follows.

The reasons that emphasize the necessity of a state economic organization have already been discussed (see supra chp. 4). Hence not attempting to recapitulate those reasons it is intended to examine how consciousness of limits or restraint brings changes in a state economy. Both the Nikayas and the modern economists accept the fact that man's desires are insatiable. The economists, however, advocate the increased production of goods and services

to satisfy man's desires. On the contrary, Buddhism says that it is necessary to find out what primary desires need to be satisfied, and then produce things accordingly. Besides, Buddhism advocates that, after understanding the true nature of existence one should follow a systematic practice that brings about the pacification of the passion that is caused by insatiable desires. Buddhism considers food, clothing, housing, medicine, employment, education, health, training in various arts and crafts, freedom etc. as basic needs that should be met with and provided for. It is pointed out in Suttas such as **Kutadanta**, **Cakkavattisihanada** and **Aggañña** that it is the duty incumbent on the state to provide these, for their non-provision leads to unrest and conflict. Further the state is also responsible to see that no social injustice would occur in the process of people trying to satisfy their needs. For this the state set up institution to regulate economic activities, promulgate laws to curb all kinds of malpractices and further, educate the people regarding these activities. The state should also provide an environment conducive to the full development of human potential and, at the same time, make maximum use of it for this benefit of the society.

To achieve this what is more necessary is to organize a just system of distribution than to prevent maldistribution. The state should lay down policies regarding just and controlled use of natural resources, should present solutions to problems which cannot be successfully handled by individuals or groups; should bring about development of all disregarding differences and conflict among men. And this development should not transgress the limits and boundaries pertaining to the people, natural resources, human desires and the nations. It is based on these policies that the consciousness of limits' and restraint have to regulate and guide the economic organization of a state. To achieve all this what is most necessary is a very effective state organization which is constituted of the most salient features of democracy and socialism. The prevailing two major political systems - socialism<sup>109</sup> and capitalism<sup>110</sup> have both come under criticism.

The **Cakkavatti** or the Universal Ruler concept presents a situation in which common decisions should be made by going beyond the narrow boundaries of states, and taking into consideration the well-being of the totality of the human kind. An example is the foreign policy of a **cakkavatti**. In this case cakkavatti should not be taken as an individual, but as an administrative institution. Under this policy, different states unite voluntarily. There is no annexation. Different states unite by agreeing on some fundamental principles that affects basic human rights; yet they maintain their separate identity. These fundamental principles are right to life, to private property, to family security, for truthful communication, and to maintain mental balance by not succumbing to intoxicating influences. These rights could be protected by any individual, society or nation irrespective of their religious and political views.

The highest point in personality development is seen in the Buddha concept; the Cakkavatti concept represents the highest point a person could rise to, in the secular sphere. The **Cakkanuvattana Sutta** describes five factors that are fundamental to both these concepts. These pertain to their knowledge regarding the proper well being, time, assembly, limits and true nature. Knowledge regarding proper well-being would mean correct understanding regarding welfare, progress and development (**atthannu**). Knowledge regarding proper time connotes the right understanding of contemporary issues. (**kalannu**) Knowledge regarding assembly means the right perspective regarding people's problems, their views and such other related matters (**parisannu**). Knowledge regarding limits means the perfect understanding of proper limits regarding everything (**mattannu**) and knowledge regarding nature means the correct vision about the true nature of existence or all phenomena (**dhammannu**). Knowledge regarding these factors becomes quite meaningful in this present and this shows that the Cakkavatti concept is not meant to represent an individual centered view, but an institution or an organization.

In what way does restraint or the 'consciousness of limits', which is brought about by the observance of the five precepts and the acquisition of the above mentioned five fold knowledges, become meaningful to the present world? This could be well understood by examining the influence exerted by the united Nations' Organization on the world. The nations join this organization purely on a voluntary basis; maintain their separate identity and follow their state policies, willingly and voluntarily agree to uphold human rights, and attempt to solve the major problems that arise with the help of certain fundamental policies. However, the problems that have arisen in the present have prompted the learned to think that this organization should be in a position to exert much greater influence. Among the factors which emphatically suggest that these problems should be solved by the dedication of institutions which are above the level of state organization, some provide important examples.

It is seen that in the present, the 'concept of development' has shot into prominence and received numerous interpretations. The question 'is it economic development or total personality development?' has been raised, and answered. Problems of contemporary importance and relevance are coming to light in international fora, and some of these problems pertain to technological development, environmental issues, nuclear warfare and the gap between haves and havenots. There are many other issues such as population explosion, the people's view on the most suitable form of government, public expression and freedom of communication and so on which are of paramount importance to the present world. Limitedness of natural resources, developmental targets, and use of technology have made the world understand the importance of 'consciousness of limits' with regard to all forms of consumption. Now, there is an attempt to see the interrelation among all problems; and this itself brings to light the fact that the question of existence of mankind itself has been

quite aggravated. Hence, the ideas presented by the Nikayas through the Cakkavatti concept turn out to be the fundamental principles of a wide and comprehensive concept that should be made use of by an international universal organization to solve the present day problems that affect the whole mankind.

During the last four decades or so inter-relationship among nations increased by leaps and bounds, and consequently there arose many new problems, making it necessary the establishment of international organization to solve them. Now the world has reached a stage where laws, regulations and decisions made in a particular country begin to have repercussions beyond national boundaries. Environmental pollution is one of the issues that severely affects the economy, and 'acid rain' causes much concern, for its effects spread far beyond the national boundaries of the country responsible for its creation. So is the effect of deforestation. It is because of such calamitous problems that reputed economists like Jan Tinbergen<sup>(111)</sup> has called for a more humanistic kind of management, which operates at an international level, to look into these issues. Even developed countries are now compelled to depend on other countries for scarce or fast diminishing natural resources and markets for their products. This situation has caused many mutually related problems in the economic and defence sectors.<sup>112</sup> The World Commission on Environment and Development<sup>113</sup> has brought into focus many examples of Interdependence of nations. All these factors point towards the conclusion that now the world has become so small that most of the problems faced by man have to be dealt with according to a plan agreed upon by common consensus. And further, that these problems should be solved with the proper understanding of 'limits' for otherwise there is a threat to mankind's existence itself. Hence, it has become very necessary to get a good grasp of the doctrine of *Paticcasamuppada* (Dependent origination) as presented in the Nikayas, through it see the mutual relations among the varied problems faced by man and then attempt to solve them, being fully mindful of the principle of 'consciousness of limits'. The only way to achieve success in this is to culture and nurture

the mind with such qualities as friendliness, compassion, generosity, equality etc. Whether one calls it the Buddhist way or not this is the only way, for what really matters is not the name, but how effective the way is. As the *Suttanipata* says, the truth is one and there is no second.<sup>114</sup> The man is able to see it and solve his problems through it. If man discards his dependence on external powers, understands the interdependent nature of everything, adopts a deep humanistic attitude towards the whole mankind, obtains a proper knowledge about the 'limits', and then diligently and earnestly strives to solve the problems that confront him, then this itself would be the Buddhist economic philosophy presented by the canon.

## END - NOTES

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293. M. I., P. 146 'Asava Samudayo Avijja Samudayo'.
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that Buddhism encourages a democratic and pluralistic social order for only within such a social order that we can expect a happy blend of individualism and socialism, a constructive harmony between unity and diversity”.

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96. M. I, P. 285.
97. Sn Stanza, 75.
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101. D. III, P. 181.
102. Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, p. 79.
103. A. III, P. 247.
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106. A. IV, P. 247.
107. A. I, P. 26. Some such individuals are Anathapindika, Citta, Hattha Alavaka, Mahanama, Ugga, Uggaha, Surambattha, Jivaka, Nakulapitu, Sujata, Visakha, Purna, Isidatta, Khujjuttara, Samavati, Uttara, Suppavasa, Suppiya, Nakulamata? Kali.

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117. *A. II*, P. 61.
118. *Sn Stanza*, 110.
119. *Sn stanza*, 396.
120. *Sn Stanza*, 123.
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139. *S. V*, P. 27ff.
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141. *M. I*, P. 299.
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147. *A. II*, P. 27.
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167. *M. I*, P. 220.
168. *Parajika Pali*.

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210. S. I, p. 116.
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41. *Sn Stanza* 393 (gahatthavattam pana vo vadami).
42. Ibid, loc cit (yathakaro savako sadhm hoti) See also *Sigalovadasutta*: *Kathan ca avuso ariyasavako chaddisa Paticchadi hoti*.
43. Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, PP 61, 83, 172 of P 61.. "These devotees tended to lack altogether any fixed status in the religious community as was originally the case with the Buddhist Upasakas".
44. See fns. 41, 42, also *Pattakamma Sutta* in this A. which says Ariyasavako *Puttadaradasa Kammakara Porise Sukheti pineti*; Further see suttas *Anana Veludvara, Gihisamicipatipada*.

45. *M.* II 196, Subha Sutta: gihissa caham manave pabbajitassa aradhako hoti nayam dhammam kusalanti.
46. *S.* V 176; *S.* V. 178; The *Vin* clearly says the King Bimbisara was a Sotapanna; See also Rune Johansson. *The Psychology of Nirvana* George. Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1969, & 119.
47. *M.* III, 71.
48. of *Sn Mangala* and *Parabhava Sutta*; *Rasiya Sutta* in *S*; and also Suttas such as *Bhogadiya*, *Vyagghapajja*, *Ujjaya*, *Vaddhi*, *Kamabhohi*, *Andha* (*Dvicakkhu*) all in *A*.
49. See *Migasala Sutta* in *A, M*, *Mahavaccagotta Sutta* which refers to *upasaka savaka gihi odatavasana brahmacarina* and *Upasika .... brahmacariniyo*.
50. *A.* III, P. 347.
51. *A.* III. P 351.
52. *D.* III. P. 188.
53. *Dhp* Stanzas 155, 156.
54. See *Janasandha Jataka* Stanza 1679.
55. *A.* II, P 69.
56. *A.* III, P 65.
57. *A.* IV, P 281.
58. *A.V.* P 137.
59. loc. cit.
60. See *Supra* Chp. 4.
61. loc, cit.
62. *A.* III, P 65.
63. *A.* II P 65.
64. *A.* II P 65.
65. *Vin.* II. P 147 *Senasakkhandha*.
66. *Dhp* Stanzas, 129-131 *S. Veludvara Sutta*.
67. *Dhp* Stanza, 205, *D II Sangiti Sutta*.
68. *S.* II.
69. *M.* I. *Sabbasava Sutta*.
70. *D.* I. P. 127.
71. *D.* III P. 59.
72. *A.* II, P. 27.
73. *S.* I *Kindada Sutta*.
74. *M.* I P. 6.
75. Ibid loc. cit.
76. *M.* I. P. 6.

77. Ibid loc cit.
78. *Vin.* II, P. 146.
79. Ibid loc. cit.
80. *Vin.* II P. 150.
81. *Vin.* II P. 149.
82. *Vin.*
83. *M.* DI, P. 118.
84. J D. Dhirasekera, *Buddhism and Beauty*, BPS Kandy P. 6.
85. *Dhp.* Stanza, 204.
86. *Jataka*, I *Atthassadvara Jataka*.
87. *Vin.* II P. 216-220.
88. *M.* II P. 214.
89. Mahinda *Palihawadana*, *Man in Nature*, P. 36.
90. *S.* IV. P. 330.
91. Dhiraselaera, op, cit. loc cit.
92. Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*. P. 79.
93. Vajiragnana Thero, *Life of a lay Buddhist*, P. 19.
94. *A.* IV. P. 281.
95. *Sn.* Stanza 402.
96. *Vin.* II PP. 216-220 *Senasanakkhandha*.
97. *Vin.* I. P. 39.
98. *S.* IV. P. 330, *Rasiya Sutta*.
99. *M.* I P. 6.
100. *A.* III P. 65.
101. *A.* IV, P. 281.
102. *D.* III, P. 188.
103. *D.* I. P. 127.
104. *M.* II P. 177.
105. *Sn.* Stanza 438.
106. Rafael M Salas, Convocation Lecture, Colombo University, 29th Aug. 1976.
107. Ibid loc cit.
108. *Sn.* Stanza, 143 ff.
109. Barrington Moor Jr. *Authority and Inequality under Capitalism and Socialism*, Oxford 1987, PP 117 f.
110. Prah Pasanthamo, quoted in *Logos*, vol. 26, No. I, March, 1987, P. 18.
111. Jan Tinbergen, 'Wise Management for a More Human World', *Solutions*, PP. 45 - 47.

112. Gerald Mische, "Redefining Sovereignty in an Interdependent World", *Solutions*, PP. 159 - 164.

114. *Sn. Stanza*, 884.

115. See note 2 and 3 above.

"During the last 30 years of increased living standards of Norway, Suicides doubled, alcohol consumption doubled and drug use, including narcotics also increased sharply. Violent crimes more than doubled and murders tripled. So, it seems that the soul of our Society has indeed been damaged, that we live in a less pleasant less happy society today than 20 or thirty years ago."

People and Planet: Alternative Noble Prize Speeches 1987, P. 96.

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